

2 CHRONICLES

INTRODUCTION

We have seen at the conclusion of 1 Chronicles that David had assembled all the material for the temple, had arranged for the manpower, had given encouragement to the leaders of the nation Israel and to the people, organized the service of the temple, provided all the money, and told Solomon to get busy. Now in 2 Chronicles Solomon is going to get busy.

We have seen that 1 Chronicles was actually all about David. It began with those long genealogies. There was a lot of begetting from Adam right on down to David. Why was the genealogy given? Because it led to David. Why David? Because David leads to Christ, and the New Testament opens with: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David . . ." ([Matt. 1:1](#)). That is the reason it is given.

I will mention again that in the Books of Chronicles we are getting God's viewpoint. In the Books of Samuel and the Books of Kings we were given man's viewpoint. This does not mean that those books were not inspired. They are inspired. But He gives first the human viewpoint, then the divine viewpoint. And the emphasis is on David. Where did David put the emphasis? He put it on the building of the temple of God.

In 2 Chronicles we will find two major themes. The first is the building of the temple. The second theme is revival. This book covers chronologically the same period as Kings but gives certain notable emphases.

The first nine chapters are given over to the reign of Solomon. Six of those chapters are concerning the building of the temple. It is pretty evident where God is putting the emphasis. The building of the temple was Solomon's greatest accomplishment. People always think of Solomon in regard to all the wives that he had. That is quite spectacular -- no question about it -- but it is not where God puts the emphasis. His having many wives wasn't in the will of God. That was contrary to the will of God, and that was a factor which brought about the division of the kingdom. Don't tell me he got by with it. He didn't. Sin always brings judgment. It doesn't matter who it is that commits the sin, it will bring judgment. The only way that anyone can get to heaven is to have a Savior, and that Savior is Jesus Christ.

So the first major theme of 2 Chronicles is Solomon's construction of the temple. That is important. God thought it was important and inspired the writer to devote six chapters to it.

From chapter 10 to the end of the book the kingdom is divided. We have seen from the Books of Kings that after the kingdom was divided there were many kings who ruled and that most of those kings were not very attractive. We have made the statement that there was not a single good king in Israel, the northern kingdom. So we find in Chronicles that there is no emphasis on the kingdom of Israel at all. The emphasis in this book is on the southern kingdom, Judah, and on David's line. That was a pretty bad lot, too. However, there were five of those kings who were outstanding: Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, Josiah. These five kings were the means of bringing revival back to the nation. God puts

the emphasis on revival, and we will spend a great deal of time talking about revival in this section.

Many years ago I belonged to a group of ministers who were praying for revival. I finally quit going because the attitude was that if we prayed hard enough, God would send revival.

May I say that God is sovereign. We are not going to make God do anything. God has a program and He is not about to change His program for you or for me. The important thing is for you and for me to get in step with God! I tell you, the will of God comes out of eternity, down through the centuries, and moves on through the centuries into eternity. God pity the little man who gets in front of that steam roller. It will go right over you, brother.

Someone will be sure to say he doesn't like that. May I remind you that we are the creatures. The creature does not try to get God to do something. It is God who is trying to get us to do something. That is the big problem. We tend to get things backwards. It is not God's duty to obey us. It is our duty to obey God. You may ask, "Well, doesn't God want to send revival?" Sure He does. And aren't we to meet His conditions? Yes, but I don't think they are meeting His conditions. It is interesting that the spiritual movement which has come about in our day did not come by these perspicuous theologians putting down conditions and the churches following them. The spiritual movement is not even in the church today. Most of the churches are as dead as dodo birds. The movement today is not among these brainy theologians. I get so tired and weary of reading their material today. Oh, they speak ex cathedra: they have all the answers! They have answers but no action -- there's no spiritual movement.

Out of some of our seminaries today there is coming a great deal of material; these professors write with great authority. They have a lot of authority, but they haven't any action. (And I really don't think they have much authority.) May I say to you today, my friend, we need to learn to bow to the will of God and to come in very close to Him: cast ourselves upon Him. We're going to see that there are certain men -- even kings -- whom God used in a marvelous way, because they were willing to take orders and not give orders. I believe that the biggest hindrance to revival is the church leadership. They are the ones who are holding it back -- and have been for years.

You may be saying, "Why, McGee, you sound like a revolutionary!" My friend, I have been a revolutionary ever since I entered the ministry, but nobody ever listened to me. I have said from the very beginning that we don't bring revival by listening to the theologians. We need to listen to the Word of God. And that is the reason I am trying to give out the Word of God. Now let me confess that I have had some ideas myself. But I am retired now, and I have discovered that the great ideas and the great programs that I had worked out were never used by God. I am beginning to suspect that revival could not come if God followed my plans either! It is ". . . Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts" ([Zech. 4:6](#)). It is not by brain nor by brawn, but by the Holy Spirit. It is hard to learn that, by the way.

The spotlight of this book is on the kings who followed in the line of David. Special prominence is given to the five kings in whose reigns were periods of revival, renewal,

and reformation. The book concludes with the decree of Cyrus after the seventy years of captivity. No record is given of the period of the captivity. That was "time out" in God's program. Remember that this is the record from God's point of view.

Outline

I. Solomon's Reign, [2Chron. 1-9](#)

II. Division of the Kingdom and History of Judah, [2Chron. 10](#) through [2Chron. 36](#)

Reformations Given Prominence:

- A. Asa's, [2Chron. 14](#) through [2Chron. 16](#)
- B. Jehoshaphat's, [2Chron. 17](#) through [2Chron. 20](#)
- C. Joash's, [2Chron. 23](#) through [2Chron. 24](#)
- D. Hezekiah's, [2Chron. 29](#) through [2Chron. 32](#)
- E. Josiah's, [2Chron. 34](#) through [2Chron. 35](#)

Chapter 1

THEME: Solomon becomes king and prays for wisdom

And Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom,
and the LORD his God was with him, and magnified him
exceedingly [[2Chron. 1:1](#)].

You will remember that I made the point that Solomon was not David's choice. He was God's choice. I really do not think that David wanted Solomon to be the next king. I think it is obvious that his choice would have been the boy who rebelled against him, Absalom. He loved Absalom. It broke David's heart when Absalom was slain. It crushed him. You remember that when he sent out his army he gave specific instructions to each of his captains that Absalom was not to be hurt. David was willing to sacrifice everything for that boy. He loved him. I think that Absalom had a lot of David's temperament. I believe in some ways he was very much like David, but he was not God's choice. God had chosen Solomon, and God is going to bless Solomon. God chooses the weak things of this world, and God is going to use Solomon. The strength of God is revealed in weakness. David is gone now. He had been a great man but Solomon is young and tender, a weakling. God will use Solomon and will allow Solomon to do the actual building of the temple.

"Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom"; the kingdom will come to its zenith under Solomon. David put the foundation under the kingdom. "And the LORD his God was with him, and magnified him exceedingly." How gracious God is!

We will see that Solomon will disobey God. He will come to the place where God will repudiate him and tell him that He will divide the kingdom. Solomon was responsible for that division. The reason God did not divide the kingdom during the reign of Solomon was for the sake of David, not for the sake of Solomon.

Then Solomon spake unto all Israel, to the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and to the judges, and to every governor in all Israel, the chief of the fathers [[2Chron. 1:2](#)].

You see, Solomon has a meeting of the leadership of Israel here.

So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness [[2Chron. 1:3](#)].

The tabernacle was up there at Gibeon. We must remember that the ark was brought by David to Jerusalem, and it is there in a tent. But they couldn't come directly and immediately to God. This is tremendous! The way to God was through that tabernacle because the brazen altar was there, and that brazen altar speaks of the Cross of Christ. They had to go there to approach God.

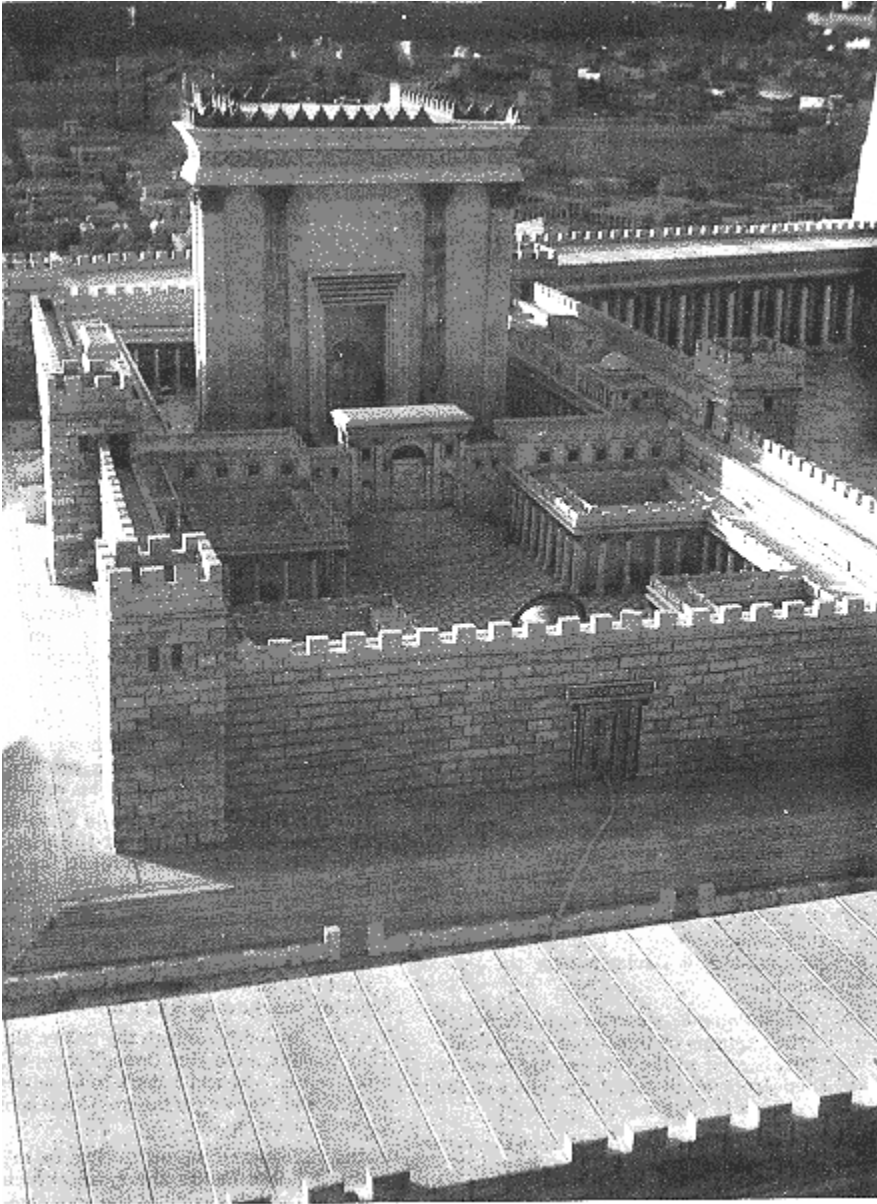
You and I must come before God in the same way. There is an idea today that anybody, under any circumstances, can just rush into the presence of God and that God has His listening-ear out. The Bible teaches that the Lord does not always hear prayers. Listen to the words of Peter: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" ([1Pet. 3:12](#)). God never said He would hear the prayers of those who do evil. I believe that the only prayer the sinner can pray to God is to go to Him and accept His mercy in Christ Jesus. If you wish to approach God, you must approach Him through the Cross.

This is what Solomon does. He takes the leaders and they go to Gibeon where the tabernacle and the brazen altar are. He is being smart at the beginning of his reign.

But the ark of God had David brought up from Kirjath-jearim to the place which David had prepared for it: for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem.

Moreover the brasen altar, that Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, he put before the tabernacle of the LORD: and Solomon and the congregation sought unto it [[2Chron. 1:4-5](#)].

The way to God is through the brazen altar. They couldn't go to Him through the ark. In other words, you and I don't come immediately to God. The way of the Cross leads home. There is no other way.



Picture: Model Of

Herod's Temple

And Solomon went up thither to the brasen altar before the LORD, which was at the tabernacle of the congregation, and offered a thousand burnt offerings upon it [[2Chron. 1:6](#)].

They certainly are not stingy in their sacrifices. You will notice all the way through this period that there was an abundance of sacrifices during Solomon's reign.

In that night did God appear unto Solomon, and said unto him, Ask what I shall give thee.

And Solomon said unto God, Thou hast shewed great mercy unto David my father, and hast made me to reign in his stead.

Now, O LORD God, let thy promise unto David my father be established: for thou hast made me king over a people like the dust of the earth in multitude [[2Chron. 1:7-9](#)].

God has made good a promise not only to David but to Abraham: "Your offspring will be like the dust" -- you can't number them.

Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great? [[2Chron. 1:10](#)].

People commend Solomon and say that he was so smart to ask for wisdom. God gave him credit for asking that. But where did he get the idea? If we turn back to chapter 22 of 1 Chronicles, we read, "And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God: but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight . . . Now, my son, the LORD be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the LORD thy God, as he hath said of thee. Only the LORD give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the LORD thy God" ([1Chron. 22:7-8](#) and [1Chron. 11-12](#)). At least Solomon was listening to his father. When David had said, "The Lord give thee wisdom and understanding," he remembered that. So when the Lord asked, "What do you want, Solomon?" he said, "I need wisdom and understanding." God gives him credit for it, though.

And God said to Solomon, Because this was in thine heart, and thou hast not asked riches, wealth, or honour, nor the life of thine enemies, neither yet hast asked long life; but hast asked wisdom and knowledge for thyself, that thou mayest judge my people, over whom I have made thee king:

Wisdom and knowledge is granted unto thee: and I will give thee riches, and wealth, and honour, such as none of the kings have had that have been before thee, neither shall there any after thee have the like [[2Chron. 1:11-12](#)].

God grants his request for wisdom and gives him other blessings besides. I want you to notice, though, that the request was for wisdom to rule the people. Solomon did not ask for spiritual discernment. We will see that Solomon lacked spiritual discernment in his own life. Although he was given divine wisdom to rule, he did not seem to have wisdom to order his personal life.

And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, which he placed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem.

And the king made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycomore trees that are in the vale for abundance [[2Chron. 1:14-15](#)].

The sycamore tree grows over there today, but you don't see many cedar trees. He made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamore, and silver and gold like the stones. If you have ever been in that land or even seen pictures of it, you know that there are rocks and stones everywhere. There are more rocks in that land than any place I have ever been. Imagine Solomon making silver and gold as commonplace as those stones!

And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.

And they fetched up, and brought forth out of Egypt a chariot for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty: and so brought they out horses for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria, by their means [[2Chron. 1:16-17](#)].

You will notice that he is already getting into an area which was forbidden to him. God had told them when the day should come that they would have a king ". . . he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way. Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold" ([Deut. 17:16-17](#)). Solomon is amassing horses and he is becoming personally wealthy. We will find that he will also multiply wives to himself.

CHAPTERS 2--4

Chapter 2

THEME: Construction of the temple

Solomon moves forward now according to the instructions that David his father had given him.

Solomon Prepares To Build (2:1-18)

And Solomon determined to build an house for the name of the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.

And Solomon told out threescore and ten thousand men to bear burdens, and fourscore thousand to hew in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred to oversee them [[2Chron. 2:1-2](#)].

The blueprints are laid out, and Solomon begins the organization to build. Notice that building the temple is the part of Solomon's reign that God emphasizes.

And Solomon sent to Hiram the king of Tyre, saying, As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him an house to dwell therein, even so deal with me [[2Chron. 2:3](#)].

Hiram loved David, and David loved Hiram. On this basis Solomon appeals to him. I think Hiram had problems with Solomon, as we shall see. He had been very generous with David, but he finds Solomon a little difficult to deal with.

Behold, I build an house to the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate it to him, and to burn before him sweet incense, and for the continual shewbread, and for the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the sabbaths, and on the new moons, and on the solemn feasts of the LORD our God. This is an ordinance for ever to Israel [[2Chron. 2:4](#)].

Notice that this is to be an ordinance forever. There have been criticisms of the restoration of temple sacrifices during the Millennium. Since the animal sacrifices pointed forward to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, why would animal sacrifices be resumed during the Millennium? Because God ordained it; that is answer enough. They will be meaningful, of course, and will be a reminder of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods [[2Chron. 2:5](#)].

In our day what makes a thing great? What makes a man great? What makes a nation great? What makes a church great? God, my friend. This is something else we are losing sight of.

But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him? [[2Chron. 2:6](#)].

It was by a sacrifice that they approached God. And the only way you and I can come to God is through the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. The important thing to note here is that Solomon had no misgivings as to who God was, or whether God would occupy and live in that house.

I once read an article about a theologian who made the statement that what Solomon was attempting to do was build a little house to put God in a box and that the people had the idea that God should be put in a box -- that He could be held there. May I say to you that Solomon had no conception like that at all; neither did the people. They were much farther advanced than a great many people are today, even in our churches. Many people call the church "God's house." Well, God doesn't occupy a house. He never did. The temple was a place to make sacrifices. It was a place of approach to God. And it had to be worthy of Him. It was highly ornate, very beautiful. It was not very large compared to other buildings of that day. For instance, if you put the temple that Solomon built down beside the temple of Diana in Ephesus or the pyramids, it would be a pygmy. But it made up for its small size in its wealth -- the tremendous amount of silver and gold that went into it.

Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue, and that can skill to grave with the cunning men that are with me in Judah and in Jerusalem, whom David my father did provide [[2Chron. 2:7](#)].

You see, they had to get the skilled workmen from the outside, because the Israelites were an agricultural people, as God intended them to be. It is interesting to see that when Jewish people return to Israel in our day, they return to the soil. I have traveled from one end of Israel to the other end, and from the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and some of the finest farms I have ever seen are there. I do not believe there is land anywhere any richer than the Valley of Esdraelon where Megiddo is located. It certainly is rich country. In Solomon's day the nation Israel did not have artificers or artisans, and they had to call upon Hiram for those.

Send me also cedar trees, fir trees, and algum trees, out of Lebanon: for I know that thy servants can skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and, behold, my servants shall be with thy servants [[2Chron. 2:8](#)].

In other words, Solomon's men would learn from them. These cedar trees are the famous cedars of Lebanon.

Even to prepare me timber in abundance: for the house which I am about to build shall be wonderful great [[2Chron. 2:9](#)].

It won't be large, but it will be great.

And, behold, I will give to thy servants, the hewers that cut timber, twenty thousand measures of beaten wheat, and twenty thousand measures of barley, and twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil [[2Chron. 2:10](#)].

Later on we shall see there was a misunderstanding relative to this payment that Solomon was to make.

Then Hiram the king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon, Because the LORD hath loved his people, he hath made thee king over them.

Hiram said moreover, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son, endued with prudence and understanding, that might build an house for the LORD, and an house for his kingdom.

And now I have sent a cunning man, endued with understanding, of Hiram my father's [[2Chron. 2:11-13](#)].

Then he goes on to describe this one whom he is sending.

And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel, after the numbering wherewith David his father had numbered them; and they were found an hundred and fifty thousand and six hundred.

And he set threescore and ten thousand of them to be bearers of burdens, and fourscore thousand to be hewers in the mountain, and three thousand and six hundred overseers to set the people awork [[2Chron. 2:17-18](#)].

These are to be the helpers, you see. These are the men who will do the common labor.

Chapter 3

Solomon Begins Construction Of The Temple (3:1-16)

Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the LORD appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite [[2Chron. 3:1](#)].

As we have seen, this threshing floor of Ornan is the site where centuries before Abraham had been told to offer Isaac. Then on that same ridge, right outside the city of Jerusalem, is located Golgotha, the place of the skull, where Jesus was crucified. David had bought this parcel of ground from Ornan. It is still the temple area today.

To those of us who are not in the construction business, the details of the blueprints and the building supplies are not particularly interesting. We will only cull out certain great truths which we do not find mentioned elsewhere.

Now these are the things wherein Solomon was instructed for the building of the house of God. The length by cubits after the first measure was threescore cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits [[2Chron. 3:3](#)].

It is twice as large as the tabernacle was: 60 x 20 cubits. This translated into feet would be approximately 90 x 30 feet. These dimensions are for the temple proper; around it there are to be many other buildings. It was quite imposing when all the buildings were in place, but the temple proper was only twice as large as the tabernacle.

Now let me call your attention to certain things, some of which we have seen, and some we have not seen.

The wings of these cherubims spread themselves forth twenty cubits: and they stood on their feet, and their faces were inward [[2Chron. 3:13](#)].

These are the cherubims that looked down on the mercy seat. You will recall that back in the tabernacle which Moses was instructed to build, God gave no measurement for the cherubim. They speak of Deity, and Deity cannot be measured. But here in the temple the measurement is given, and they are undoubtedly much larger than in the tabernacle. There is a note of deterioration here, as they are attempting to measure Deity, and that cannot be done.

Let me remind you that we are seeing the temple from God's viewpoint. What is it that God calls attention to which was not given from the human viewpoint in Kings? Well, it is the beauty of the veil.

And he made the veil of blue, and purple, and crimson, and fine linen, and wrought cherubims thereon [[2Chron. 3:14](#)].

The veil speaks of the humanity of Christ. God calls attention to that. When Christ was crucified, the veil of the temple was torn in two, since the veil represented the humanity

of Christ. The rending of that veil signified that a "new and living way" was opened for all believers into the very presence of God with no other sacrifice than Christ's. Here in Chronicles God calls attention to the beauty of the veil. It is as if He said, ". . . This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" ([Matt. 3:17](#)).

Something else we should notice is the pillars.

Also he made before the house two pillars of thirty and five cubits high, and the chapter that was on the top of each of them was five cubits [[2Chron. 3:15](#)].

This meant that these pillars went up very high (see model of the temple, pp. 120 and 153). Compared to the size of the building, they seem almost out of proportion. These pillars speak of strength and beauty.

Strength and beauty are two things which modern man thinks he has attained. We boast of our strength; yet we are powerless to maintain law and order. And as far as beauty is concerned, have you looked at modern art? My daughter majored in art, and she took me through a classroom to show me what they were doing. She would say, "Dad, isn't that beautiful?" Well, I didn't want to misrepresent how I felt -- I couldn't say it was beautiful. I could say, "My, I haven't seen anything like that!" And believe me, I hadn't.

And he made chains, as in the oracle, and put them on the heads of the pillars; and made an hundred pomegranates, and put them on the chain [[2Chron. 3:16](#)].

He mentions these chains. What do they represent? They speak of the unity of the nation. The chains picture the unity of the individuals that constitute the tribes, and the tribes in turn constitute the nation.

God is interested in absolute unity. This is something which God's people are losing sight of in our day. We are split and fragmented into thousands of different groups today. There are always new organizations coming into existence. I am not sure that all this is honoring to the Lord. You see, in the New Testament God has given a picture of unity that is even better than the chain. It is the body. He says His church is a body. In a body there can be many members, and some of the members are of honor and some of dishonor, but they are all in one body. That is the picture of the church.

Chapter 4

Solomon Begins Construction Of The Temple (continued) (4:12-13)

God is interested in strength and beauty, and those pillars of the temple were very impressive. In chapter 4 He again mentions this matter of strength and beauty:

To wit, the two pillars, and the pommels, and the chapters which were on the top of the two pillars, and the two wreaths to cover the two pommels of the chapters which were on the top of the pillars [[2Chron. 4:12](#)].

God is calling particular attention to it. Notice also the use of pomegranates -- one hundred of them. Also we read:

And four hundred pomegranates on the two wreaths; two rows of pomegranates on each wreath, to cover the two pommels of the chapters which were upon the pillars [[2Chron. 4:13](#)].

Pomegranates speak of fruitfulness, and that is the emphasis here.

I didn't specifically mention the colors that are used here. Notice that the veil was of blue and purple and crimson and fine linen. Blue is the color of the heaven above. Purple is the color of royalty, and crimson speaks of redemption through the blood of Christ. White speaks of the holy walk. All these colors are important from God's point of view.

Chapter four gives details about the articles of furniture: the altar of brass, the huge laver, the ten smaller lavers, the candlesticks, the tables. Then there were pots and shovels and basins. The brazen altar was four times as large as the one in the tabernacle. There were additional lavers in the temple. There were other additions and changes.

The innovations and enlargements took away the simplicity of the tabernacle and the plain references to Christ. It is the tabernacle and not the temple which became the figure that was used in the Epistle to the Hebrews to depict the person and work of Christ.

CHAPTERS 5 AND 6

Chapter 5

THEME: The completed temple

Thus all the work that Solomon made for the house of the LORD was finished: and Solomon brought in all the things that David his father had dedicated; and the silver, and the gold, and all the instruments, put he among the treasures of the house of God.

Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel, unto Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the city of David, which is Zion [[2Chron. 5:1-2](#)].

After the temple was completed, the ark was brought into the temple. Zion is right up on the hill not very far from the temple area. I have walked it several times, both up and down, because it is not too far.

We don't know the exact spot where David was keeping the ark, but it was in the city of David which is Mount Zion. That is not a very large area and it is not far from the temple area.

Also king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled unto him before the ark, sacrificed sheep and oxen, which could not be told nor numbered for multitude [[2Chron. 5:6](#)].

The thought here is that there was no attempt to count them because they represent the sacrifice of Christ. And that is something which cannot be counted or measured.

And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, to the oracle of the house, into the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims:

For the cherubims spread forth their wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims covered the ark and the staves thereof above.

And they drew out the staves of the ark, that the ends of the staves were seen from the ark before the oracle; but they were not seen without. And there it is unto this day [[2Chron. 5:7-9](#)].

"Unto this day" refers, of course, to the time of the writing of Chronicles. The staves were drawn out.

The ark is to move no more. You will remember that the ark was constructed in the wilderness at Mount Sinai, and then the children of Israel spent forty years wandering in the wilderness. The ark was always carried before them as they traveled. It was the ark that went first through the Jordan River when they entered the Promised Land. After they had arrived in the land, the ark was still moved from place to place. Remember that once it was even captured by the Philistines, and then it was sent back by them.

The ark had been brought to Jerusalem by David, and he had kept it at Mount Zion until the time when the temple should be completed. That time has now come, and the ark is placed into the most holy place, and the staves are removed. It is to move no more. The males of the children of Israel are to appear at the tabernacle at three feasts of the year: Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. This means that from now on they will come to Jerusalem on those feast days and appear at the temple where the ark rests.

You will remember that the ark speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ, of His person. Above the ark was the mercy seat which speaks of His work of redemption, His shedding of blood, the fact that He is now our propitiation. All of that is permanent. ". . . but now once in the end of the world [lit., the end of the age] hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" ([Heb. 9:26](#)). It is permanent, it is basic, it is established. Let me use the figure of speech here: the staves have been pulled out. There will be no other way of salvation. Peter could say to his people, "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" ([Acts 4:12](#)). My friend, the staves have been pulled out. The ark is not on the move any more.

Also the withdrawing of the staves indicates rest. The Lord Jesus gives rest to those who come to Him. Also there is to be a place of rest. Our Lord spoke of that place when He said to His own men in the Upper Room, ". . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" ([John 14:2-3](#)). The place is prepared, and one of these days we will go to that place.

One of the characteristics of that place is its permanence, the fact that it is a place of eternity. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" ([Rev. 21:4](#)). This is the city of God. It is permanent, and ". . . the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" ([Rev. 21:22](#)). My friend, the

staves are already pulled out. How wonderful that we are not going to be on the march. We don't have to go looking for God. As Paul said to the Romans, we don't have to go to heaven to bring Christ down, nor do we have to go down to hell to bring Him up. He is right there for us. This is permanent; it is eternal. It will not be changed. He drew out the staves.

There was nothing in the ark save the two tables which Moses put therein at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt [[2Chron. 5:10](#)].

Two things that had been placed in the ark by Moses are now missing: Aaron's rod and the pot of manna. The manna, you will recall from the account of [Numbers 17](#), would disappear if the people didn't gather it. And if it was not eaten the same day, it would spoil. However a pot of manna was preserved in the ark as a memorial. Now it is gone. The manna was a symbol of Christ as the Bread of Life, who feeds those who are His own. Aaron's rod that budded ([Exod. 16](#)) is a symbol of Christ's resurrection. It has been actualized to us today by the historical fact that Jesus died (that's His humanity), was buried, then rose again the third day -- that's not human; it reveals His deity. The priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ rests upon His resurrection, just as Aaron's priesthood was confirmed by the budding of his rod, a type of resurrection.

And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course) [[2Chron. 5:11](#)].

You see, all the courses came up for this act of dedication. The singers were there, and the orchestra with cymbals and psalteries and harps, and 120 trumpet players!

It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD [[2Chron. 5:13](#)].

This was a great occasion!

So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God [[2Chron. 5:14](#)].

Now as we come to chapter 6 we have the message of Solomon for this occasion and his prayer of dedication.

Chapter 6

Solomon's Message (6:1-11)

This is a tremendous message that Solomon gives.

Then said Solomon, The LORD hath said that he would dwell in the thick darkness.

But I have built an house of habitation for thee, and a place for thy dwelling for ever.

And the king turned his face, and blessed the whole congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood [[2Chron. 6:1-3](#)].

Now Solomon addresses the people.

And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, who hath with his hands fulfilled that which he spake with his mouth to my father David, saying [[2Chron. 6:4](#)].

David, you see, is the one responsible for the temple.

Since the day that I brought forth my people out of the land of Egypt I chose no city among all the tribes of Israel to build an house in, that my name might be there; neither chose I any man to be a ruler over my people Israel:

But I have chosen Jerusalem, that my name might be there; and have chosen David to over my people Israel [[2Chron. 6:5-6](#)].

In God's sovereign will He chose Jerusalem to be the center and the capital of this earth. It will be that some day. He chose Jerusalem for the place the temple would stand. He chose David to be the king, and now one in David's line. This is the arbitrary, the absolute will of God in making this choice.

Now, my friend, our choices are often quite different from God's choices. For example, I would not have chosen Jerusalem. I think the most beautiful spot in that land is at Samaria where Ahab and Jezebel lived. Many folk build on a hillside so they have a view of the valley, but in Samaria you can look in every direction. On the west you see the Mediterranean Sea. On the east you see the Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee. On the south you see Jerusalem, and when you look to the north you see Mount Hermon. That's quite a view! I would choose that place for the capital. But God did not consult me or my wishes. God chose Jerusalem. This is the sovereign will of God. God says, "I have chosen Jerusalem."

My friend, God has His will for you and for me. I actually believe that for a child of God He has a certain place, a certain house for you to live in. His will for you involves everything in your life. The great problem for you and me is to get in the will of God. We can stand off and argue all we want to about the free will of man and God's sovereignty, but it is a fruitless waste of time. I'll tell you something that is very profitable: it is to get to the place -- in fact, on the spot that God has marked "X" -- which He has chosen for you and for me. When you and I get on that spot, we will be in the right place. God's will is the important thing.

God chose Jerusalem; God chose this man David.

Now it was in the heart of David my father to build an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel [[2Chron. 6:7](#)].

Solomon is saying that he has done what David wanted done; he is carrying out his wishes in building the temple.

The LORD therefore hath performed his word that he hath spoken: for I am risen up in the room of David my father, and am set on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built the house for the name of the Lord God of Israel.

And in it have I put the ark, wherein is the covenant of the LORD, that he made with the children of Israel [[2Chron. 6:10-11](#)].

This is all-important to see.

Solomon's Prayer (6:12-42)

Now we have this wonderful prayer of dedication.

And he stood before the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands:

For Solomon had made a brasen scaffold, of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court: and upon it he stood, and kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven [[2Chron. 6:12-13](#)].

If you are wondering about the proper posture for prayer, Solomon kneeled down. On your knees is a fitting posture for a creature in the presence of his Creator.

Solomon begins with thanksgiving.

And said, O LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee in the heaven, nor in the earth; which keepest covenant, and shewest mercy unto thy servants, that walk before thee with all their hearts:

Thou which hast kept with thy servant David my father that which thou hast promised him; and spakest with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day [[2Chron. 6:14-15](#)].

He is thanking God because He is the Creator and because of His mercy and His faithfulness. In his grace He had moved into the heart of David, into the nation, and into the heart and life of Solomon.

In our day a great many Christians need an experience with God. It seems that they are satisfied to stand off and stiff-arm the Lord. They keep Him at a distance, yet they say, "Yes, I'm a Christian." My friend, let's have a close relationship with Him and real fellowship.

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built! [[2Chron. 6:18](#)].

This is an important verse, to which I have referred before. Certainly neither Solomon nor the nation Israel had any notion of "boxing God in" when they built a temple for Him. Rather the temple was to be a meeting place between God and man.

That thine eyes may be upon this house day and night, upon the place whereof thou hast said that thou wouldest put thy name there; to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant prayeth toward this place [[2Chron. 6:20](#)].

You see, this temple was the place where man could meet God.

Hearken therefore unto the supplications of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, which they shall make toward this place: hear thou from thy dwelling place, even from heaven; and when thou hearest, forgive [[2Chron. 6:21](#)].

The temple was to become the very center of the life of the nation Israel.

And if thy people Israel be put to the worse before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee; and shall return and confess thy name, and pray and make supplication before thee in this house;

Then hear thou from the heavens, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest to them and to their fathers [[2Chron. 6:24-25](#)].

When they had sinned, they were to come back to that temple.

When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them [[2Chron. 6:26](#)].

When there is a drought in the land because of the sin of the people, what are they to do? Come back to God in prayer.

If there be dearth in the land, if there be pestilence, if there be blasting, or mildew, locusts, or caterpillars; if their enemies besiege them in the cities of their land; whatsoever sore or whatsoever sickness there be [[2Chron. 6:28](#)].

Whatever calamity might come to them, they were to return to the temple and pray to God.

Then hear thou from heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and render unto every man according unto all his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou only knowest the hearts of the children of men:) [[2Chron. 6:30](#)].

God knows us, my friend. That is the reason we ought to be doing business with Him.

Moreover concerning the stranger, which is not of thy people Israel, but is come from a far country for thy great name's sake, and thy mighty hand, and thy stretched out arm; if they come and pray in this house;

Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for; that all people of the earth may know thy name, and fear thee, as doth thy

people Israel, and may know that this house which I have built is called by thy name [[2Chron. 6:32-33](#)].

You see, this was a great missionary project. The temple was not only for Israel -- the whole world was to come there. If a stranger or foreigner would come from a far country -- from the end of the earth -- he could meet God at the temple.

If they sin against thee, (for there is no man which sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them over before their enemies, and they carry them away captives unto a land far off or near [[2Chron. 6:36](#)].

In the country to which they are taken captive, they are to turn in the direction of the temple and lift their voices to God. This is what Daniel did, you recall. Daniel opened his windows toward Jerusalem (the temple by that time had been destroyed), kneeled, and prayed to God three times a day ([Dan. 6:10](#)). And God heard his prayer.

If they return to thee with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, whither they have carried them captives, and pray toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, and toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house which I have built for thy name:

Then hear thou from the heavens, even from thy dwelling place, their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive thy people which have sinned against thee.

Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place [[2Chron. 6:38-40](#)].

The temple was to be the meeting place.

Now therefore arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness.

O LORD God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant [[2Chron. 6:41-42](#)].

This is a glorious prayer. Notice that he makes it on the basis of the mercy God extended to David.

You and I are to pray because Christ has made a mercy seat for us by His shed blood. He made peace for us by the blood of His cross, and God is prepared to extend mercy to us.

Chapter 7

THEME: God's acceptance of the temple

In the preceding chapter we have seen the dedication service of the temple. We have read Solomon's message and his great prayer of dedication. In this chapter we shall see God's response to it.

Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house [[2Chron. 7:1](#)].

This is what happened, you recall, when Moses finished the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness. When he set it up, the glory of the Lord filled it ([Exod. 40:34-35](#)). God accepts this temple that Solomon has built.

Notice that fire from heaven consumes the sacrifice. This means that the judgment of God has fallen upon sin. God does not accept the temple because it is beautiful -- and it is that. He does not accept it because of the lavish expenditure of wealth. The basis of His acceptance is the fact that it is pointing to Christ. It is His sacrifice, actually, that makes this acceptable to God. The glory of the Lord filled the temple, as we have seen in the final verses of chapter 5, and now also fire from heaven consumes the burnt offering.

These people had the visible presence of God. In the New Testament, in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, he answers the question: who are Israelites? He gives eight fingerprints of identification, one of which is that they had the glory.

No other people have had the visible presence of God except the Israelites.

And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD,
because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house.

And when all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down,
and the glory of the LORD upon the house, they bowed themselves
with their faces to the ground upon the pavement, and worshipped,
and praised the LORD, saying, for he is good; for his mercy
endureth for ever [[2Chron. 7:2-3](#)].

And, my friend, this is an expression that I trust will get into your vocabulary, and that you will say from time to time, "The LORD is good; His mercy endureth forever." You recall that the psalmist said, "The LORD is good. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so." If you and I are not "say-so Christians," nobody else will be. Nobody in politics will be saying how good God is; they will be telling us how great they are and what their party is doing for the country. Candidly, none of the politicians seem to be doing much good, by the way. But the Lord is good. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD.

And king Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty and two thousand
oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep: so the king and
all the people dedicated the house of God [[2Chron. 7:4-5](#)].

These verses have caused a great deal of criticism by the skeptics of the Bible. They love to criticize on the basis of three issues: (1) They say this offering and sacrifice was an extravagance; (2) they say it would have been physically impossible to offer that many sacrifices on the altar; and (3) they say there was no necessity for all this slaughter of animals. I'm sure the members of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would protest this.

Now let us look at these three issues from a biblical perspective. We need to look at things in the light of the Word of God. In the first place, although the temple was the center for all this activity, I do not think that every one of those animals was sacrificed on one altar. For this special occasion they probably had erected altars all over that temple area. It was not a physical impossibility.

Now why was there all of this expenditure? Well, it was necessary in order for each area to have its own sacrifice. It was as when the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt and a lamb was slain for each home. There must have been literally thousands of lambs that were slain that night. It was not a needless waste for two reasons. The primary meaning of it is that it symbolizes the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. And, my friend, it was Simon Peter who said that His blood was precious. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" ([1Pet. 1:18-19](#)). This is not a great expenditure because it is pointing to Christ. The second reason that it was not a "needless waste" was that the meat was used for food afterward. Although the "burnt offerings" were totally consumed by fire, other offerings, such as the peace offering, were eaten. This dedication of the temple was a time of great feasting and great celebrating.

Let's be fair with the Bible, my friend.

I have observed the people who are always talking about the great extravagance of money spent for the Lord. It is an amazing fact that even Christian people are guilty of this kind of criticism. I knew a dear lady who was very much interested in Bible classes; she had one in her home. We had a Bible teacher come to our church. The people liked him, and they gave him a generous offering. He stayed with us for about ten days and the church gave him \$500.00 plus his expenses. This lady thought that was ridiculous; it was too great an expenditure. Also this lady was interested in music, and she was on the music committee of the town where she lived, and they brought a certain opera singer to town. He sang one night and they gave him \$2,000.00. She thought that was wonderful. May I say to you, it is interesting that when something is being spent for the Lord it is just a waste, but when something is spent for the things of the world it is all right.

To anyone who thinks they were slaying too many animals for sacrifice, how many animals are slain in this country every day? There are thousands of animals slain every day in the packing houses of our country. No one raises a voice or does anything to protest that. After all, that is to satisfy us. But when something is done for the glory of God, there will always be people who will object. I don't know about you, but I'm on Solomon's side here. I think he did the right thing, because the sacrifices were pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He shed His precious blood for me.

And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy endureth for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood [[2Chron. 7:6](#)].

I wish I could get God's people to praise the Lord and to say that God is good and His mercy endures forever. Oh, how good God has been to me! Has He been good to you, friends? Well then, say so.

Moreover Solomon hallowed the middle of the court that was before the house of the LORD: for there he offered burnt offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the brasen altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, and the meat offerings, and the fat.

Also at the same time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt [[2Chron. 7:7-8](#)].

From the entering of Hamath to the river of Egypt means from the extreme north to the extreme south of the land.

God's Second Appearance To Solomon (7:12-22)

And the lord appeared to Solomon by night, and said unto him, I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice.

If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people;

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land [[2Chron. 7:12-14](#)].

I am going to spend time on this last verse because it has been so often used out of context without regard to its primary meaning. It has been quoted as a promise to us from God that if we do certain things, He will do certain things. This verse has been tailored to fit into any local situation. I don't believe I have ever participated in an evangelistic campaign without someone at some time getting up and quoting this verse of Scripture and saying that he was resting on these promises. I believe that a careful consideration of this verse, its location and content and context, will prevent us from taking it like a capsule and swallowing it without some attention to its real meaning. We do violence to it by wresting it from its place. Just because it seems to fit into our plans and says what we want to say, we ignore its primary purpose and rob it of its vitality. It becomes, actually, a meaningless verse as it is being used in our day.

Now I want to speak very plainly to you. I am a dispensationalist. I think it is the only system that deals with the entire Bible consistently. It gives a literal meaning to the Word of God and gives it a real meaning. I am a graduate of a denominational seminary in which most of the Scripture was absolutely ignored because they had no interpretation for it. The way we were taught the Bible was sort of like going to a corncrib and taking out enough to feed the chickens -- and the rest you didn't worry about. That was because they had no interpretation for it. The problem was that no one wanted to come back for more because if you went into more sections of Scripture than just those few they taught, you

might get into trouble. Although the dispensational interpretation has its problems, it solves more problems than any other interpretation that I have heard.

Let me give you examples of the position I take. I recognize that the Sermon on the Mount looks forward to the time of the Kingdom and it will be the law of the Kingdom. However, I also believe that it has a message for us today. I think the way the Lord's Prayer is used in a great many churches by an affluent society is absolutely meaningless. In the Great Tribulation that prayer will really mean something to people. Although I am a dispensationalist, I am not a hyper-dispensationalist. I don't exclude the Sermon on the Mount. I preach on it. It shows that man comes short of God's standards. I find the Lord's Prayer helpful. I pray it. I have written a little book on it entitled, *Let Us Pray*. There is an interpretation of Scripture -- that is one thing. Then there is an application of Scripture, which is something else. Remember the old adage that "all Scripture is written for us, but not all Scripture is written to us." The interpretation of a verse of Scripture will teach what it means in its setting and context. It may not be written to us at all. We can think of many commands given in the Old Testament which are not commands given to us. However, the application of all of Scripture is for us. God has something to teach us throughout the entire Scripture.

Now let's go back to [2Chronicles 7:14](#). The setting is at the dedication of David's temple which Solomon had built. It is God's Word to Solomon concerning that land in that day. At the dedication Solomon prayed this great prayer which we have seen. Now He remembers the prayers of His people, and He says to Solomon, "If my people, which are called by my name . . ." To whom is He talking? "My people, which are called by My name." That is Israel. God is talking to Solomon about Israel. Now, if these will humble themselves, if they will pray, if they will seek His face, if they will turn from their wicked ways, then God promises three things to Israel: He will hear their prayer, He will forgive them, He will heal their land. These were definite conditions that God put down for Israel, and their history demonstrates the accuracy and literalness of these specifics.

Now when you come to the New Testament, you find that John the Baptist says, ". . . Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" ([Matt. 3:2](#)). And the Lord Jesus Christ repeated that, calling upon the nation to meet these conditions -- so that the promises of God could be fulfilled. It was a legitimate offer. In our day, the people of Israel have been scattered throughout the world. They cannot have peace in that land because they have not met those conditions. This is a literal interpretation.

Now there is an application. This verse has a message for me. I can't toss it aside just because God did not direct it to me. It contains a formula for this hour. "My people" -- God has a people which we call the church or the body of Christ, those who have accepted the Savior, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" ([Titus 2:14](#)). I guess one could say a lot of us are peculiar people, but this means a people for Himself "Shall humble themselves" -- the flesh is proud but we are admonished to be humble. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" ([Eph. 4:1-2](#)). We are told in [Galatians 5:22-23](#) that longsuffering and meekness are fruits of the Spirit. Humbleness is commended for the believer today. "And

pray" -- certainly many, many times in the New Testament we are admonished to pray. The Lord Jesus told His disciples to watch and pray. The epistles contain numerous commands to pray. "And seek My face" is also a New Testament admonition: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" ([Col. 3:1-2](#)). And turn from their wicked ways." This also applies to us. God had a great deal to say about repentance for believers. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" ([Rev. 3:19](#)). Repentance is for the child of God.

Now how about God's part? God has promised that He would hear. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" ([1John 3:22](#)). He promised to forgive: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" ([1John 1:9](#)).

"And will heal their land." That does not apply to us. I can't find anywhere in the New Testament where the Lord has promised to heal a piece of real estate. If God has blessed you in a business way, that is extra -- a blessing that He has not promised. Nowhere does God promise material blessing to us. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. We were aliens, enemies of God, and now we have been made the blood of Christ, and He forgives us our sins. Heaven is our home, and the New Jerusalem is our goal. We have been delivered from hell. These are our blessings. Nowhere are we promised a land or healing in our land.

May I say to you that if you would wish to lift out [verse 14](#) and apply the entire verse to your present situation, then you must take [verse 15](#) along with it.

Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer
that is made in this place [[2Chron. 7:15](#)].

If you want to follow this particular injunction, then I suggest you board the next plane to Jerusalem and go to the temple site. You would find that the temple isn't even there -- the Mosque of Omar is there now, but if you intend to follow this passage, you must go to Jerusalem because that is where "this place" is.

I don't know why folk will lift out of context one verse of Scripture and claim it for themselves. It was never intended that way. This promise was given to Israel at the dedication of the temple. Although it has application for us, it is better to go to the New Testament and find God's promises to us directly.

For now have I chosen and sanctified this house, that my name
may be there for ever: and mine eyes and mine heart shall be
there perpetually [[2Chron. 7:16](#)].

I stayed for a week in a hotel overlooking the temple area. When I would get up in the morning, I would walk out to the window -- actually a big glass door -- and look at this temple area. I thought, I am looking at a spot where God is also looking. This is a spot that is very dear to Him.

And as for thee, if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, and do according to all that I have commanded thee, and shalt observe my statutes and my judgments;

Then will I stablish the throne of thy kingdom, according as I have covenanted with David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man to be ruler in Israel [[2Chron. 7:17-18](#)].

God has promised that in the Davidic line there would not be a time when there would not be a ruler. There is no ruler around on this earth today who can claim to be in David's line. But there is One sitting at God's right hand who is in David's line, and He has been told, ". . . Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" ([Ps. 110:1](#); see also [Heb. 10:12-13](#)).

But if ye turn away, and forsake my statutes and my commandments, which I have set before you, and shall go and serve other gods, and worship them;

Then will I pluck them up by the roots out of my land which I have given them; and this house, which I have sanctified for my name, will I cast out of my sight, and will make it to be a proverb and a byword among all nations [[2Chron. 7:19-20](#)].

It certainly has become a byword today. It is no longer a sacred spot -- the Mosque of Omar stands there.

And this house, which is high, shall be an astonishment to every one that passeth by it; so that he shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and unto this house? [[2Chron. 7:21](#)].

That place today is where the Mosque of Omar stands. I stood there with several folk overlooking the temple area and one of them raised the question stated in this verse. "Why, this is where God's house was supposed to be, and look at it today. There is heathenism and paganism here as much as there is anywhere on the earth. You'd think that since this is God's spot He would not permit this kind of thing to happen." Well, my friend, this is exactly what God said would happen.

And it shall be answered, Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, and laid hold on other gods, and worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath he brought all this evil upon them [[2Chron. 7:22](#)].

I was privileged to tell that individual that the Word of God says very clearly that this would happen because Israel had forsaken the Lord God. I could show him that God is true to His Word.

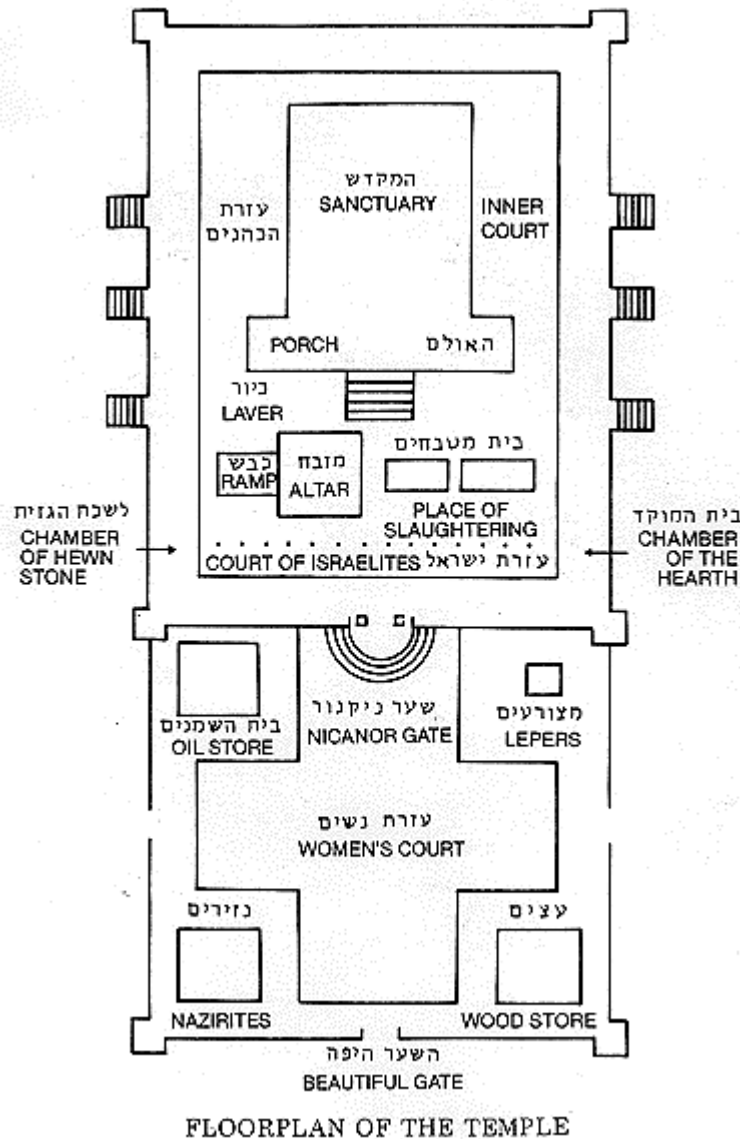
CHAPTERS 8 AND 9

Chapter 8

THEME: Accomplishments and fame of Solomon

These next two chapters tell something of the experience and the work of Solomon and his testimony in other areas. This man became a very energetic ruler. He attempted to carry out all the plans and purposes and promises of David.

And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, wherein Solomon had built the house of the LORD, and his own house [2Chron. 8:1].



Picture: Floorplan Of The

Temple

This building of the temple was a long project. It actually took half his reign to build it. This is the thing of which God took special note.

That the cities which Hiram had restored to Solomon, Solomon built them, and caused the children of Israel to dwell there.

And Solomon went to Hamath-zobah, and prevailed against it [2Chron. 8:2-3].

This is the only war that is recorded during the reign of Solomon, and it doesn't seem to be very significant at all.

But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no servants for his work; but they were men of war, and chief of his captains, and captains of his chariots and horsemen [2Chron. 8:9].

Solomon put his own people in the army and in places of leadership, while the menial tasks were assigned to descendants of the Canaanite tribes, the old possessors of the land, who had not been exterminated.

And these were the chief of king Solomon's officers, even two hundred and fifty, that bare rule over the people [2Chron. 8:10].

This is something that Solomon did which caused great difficulty later on. God notes it, but He does not commend it or bless it.

And Solomon brought up the daughter of Pharaoh out of the city of David unto the house that he had built for her: for he said, My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places are holy, whereunto the ark of the LORD hath come [2Chron. 8:11].

This is an interesting decision which Solomon made in reference to his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh. He built her a palace away from the city of David.

I notice that an interpretation that one gets in Israel today is that Solomon married these different women from various other countries for political advantage. Your father-in-law is not apt to make war against you. So this was one of the ways in which Solomon brought peace to the land. A man would not come up to fight against a country in which his daughter was the queen. I do not know whether this reason for Solomon's many wives is true or not. I have a notion that it is partly accurate. Under any circumstance, it was against God's command.

The remainder of the chapter tells more about the temple and that Solomon celebrated the feasts and appointed the priests and Levites to their courses just as David had planned it.

As we come to chapter 9, we see that it is the final chapter that concerns Solomon. We have seen that Solomon's most important accomplishment was the construction of the temple. Now what else in Solomon's life does God consider important enough to record a second time? It is very interesting to see that Solomon did succeed in doing what God had intended Israel to do -- that is, be a witness to the world. We are told here how it was accomplished.

The way Israel was to witness was different from the way the church is to witness in our day. Israel faced in; the church faces out. Israel was to go up to Jerusalem to the temple and invite the world to come with her to worship. But the church is to begin at Jerusalem and go to the ends of the earth. In other words, the church is to take the gospel to the world, and Israel was to invite the world to come and share in the revelation of God in the

temple. Israel was to bear witness to the living and true God as a nation in a world of polytheism, of many gods. And the church is to bear witness to a resurrection, and the living Savior, as individuals to all the nations in a world of atheism. Now, Israel fulfilled her God-given purpose to a certain extent, which is evidenced by the number of Gentiles who came to Jerusalem to worship and to know God through the service of the temple there. The measuring rod for the success of the church is the number of tribes and nations to whom we carry the gospel today.

Now it is the inclination of all of us who are in the church to disparage the efforts of Israel and at the same time to magnify the success of the church. Constantly we hear on every hand of the failure of the nation Israel. And at the same time the exaggerated report is given of the success of the gospel in faraway places. I remember after World War II we heard about a revival in China and then a revival in Germany. I checked with those who were in both places and they said there was no revival there. It is interesting that we always hear of revivals in faraway places.

The fact of the matter is that we are in an awful apostasy today. The days are getting darker. There are many wonderful churches and pastors who are still faithful today, but they know the difficulty of the hour in which we are living. Although there are still a few preachers and teachers who are sheltered in institutions who see the present-day situation as though they were looking through rose-colored glasses, anyone who is working out in the world knows that we are in an apostasy today.

On the other hand, Israel succeeded in a far greater measure than we often realize. We tend to measure their success by their final failure -- the final apostasy of the nation which led to their captivity. There was a period when they did not fail God. A witness went forth from Jerusalem to the nations of the world. They were drawn to Jerusalem like a magnet. The high water mark was during the reign of Solomon. The nation reached a pinnacle at that time. Afterward there was deterioration, and decline set in like dry rot.

The Scriptures give us two isolated examples of the influence on the Gentiles during the reign of David and Solomon. Undoubtedly there were many others that we do not know about. Hiram, the king of Tyre and friend of David, came to know God. He made lavish gifts for the temple. He furnished material and workmen for the temple. Do you remember what he wrote to Solomon? ". . . Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, that made heaven and earth, who hath given to David the king a wise son . . ." ([2Chron. 2:12](#)). Hiram was a son of Japheth. The story of the queen of Sheba is given to us to record that Israel reached the ends of the then-known world with a witness for God. She is a representative of the son of Ham. It is her story that is given to us in this chapter.

May I remind you that in the New Testament, when we are told about the early church and its outreach into the world, we are also given just a few examples. There is the Ethiopian eunuch who is the son of Ham. There is Cornelius who is the son of Japheth. There is Saul of Tarsus who is the son of Shem.

Chapter 9

Visit Of The Queen Of Sheba (9:1-8)

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company, and camels that bare spices, and gold in abundance, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart.

And Solomon told her all her questions: and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not [[2Chron. 9:1-2](#)].

In other words, Solomon told her the secret of his kingdom. He told her that God had given him his wisdom. He told her that the temple was their approach to God because God had said it was there He would meet with His people.

And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built,

And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her [[2Chron. 9:3-4](#)].

In [1Kings 10:24](#) we are told, "And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart." We are given just this one illustration of the queen of Sheba who came to see the wisdom of Solomon. You can see that the nation of Israel was successful in witnessing to the world.

"His ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord" was the burnt offering which he made. That burnt offering speaks of Christ. No nation on earth had anything that would compare to an offering for sin. This was the thing which absolutely amazed her. This was the offering that was pointing to Christ. David had said and written so much about Christ that I don't think Solomon left her without an explanation of the One who was to come to take away sin.

And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thy wisdom:

Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard [[2Chron. 9:5-6](#)].

This woman said, "When I heard about what God had done, I just didn't believe it." But she had faith enough so that when she heard about the greatness of Solomon, she made a long, arduous trip to see for herself. Believe me, it was a long, arduous trip in that day. She couldn't go out to the airport and take a plane which would bring her there in a couple of hours. It was probably a couple of months across a hot, burning desert. She came all the way in order that she might know something of the wisdom of this man and learn about his approach to God. That was the thing that left no spirit in her. She couldn't believe it until she had seen it. Now listen to her:

Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom.

Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne, to be king for the LORD thy God: because thy God loved Israel, to establish them for ever, therefore made he thee king over them, to do judgment and justice [[2Chron. 9:7-8](#)].

This woman is now praising God! When our Lord spoke of her, He said, "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon . . ." ([Matt. 12:42](#)). There is a Sheba in southwestern Arabia and in Africa. Since the Lord Jesus said that she came from the uttermost parts of the earth, I assume she came from Africa. But her entourage reveals the wealth and luxury of the orient. The wise men never made a greater impression than did this woman. She came with great pomp and ceremony befitting an oriental monarch. It seems that the burnt offering was what impressed her the most. This was the most complete and perfect picture of Christ that was given in the Old Testament. How well did Israel succeed in giving a witness to the Gentiles? Well, this woman came to know the living and true God.

Our Lord, you recall, one day spoke to a woman at a well and said: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father" ([John 4:21](#)). In Jesus' day, that "hour" was coming. And that hour did come so that today we are to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. However, in Solomon's day, the world came to Jerusalem to hear the gospel.

Solomon's Splendor (9:22-28)

And king Solomon passed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, that God had put in his heart [[2Chron. 9:22-23](#)].

Solomon was bearing a witness to the world in his day.

And Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; whom he bestowed in the chariot cities, and with the king at Jerusalem [[2Chron. 9:25](#)].

This reveals the defect in this man's character. The king had been forbidden by the Mosaic Law to multiply horses and wives. Solomon multiplied both. One of the most impressive things at Megiddo is the ruins of the stables that Solomon had there. And there are ruins of his stables in several other areas. He really multiplied horses!

And he reigned over all the kings from the river even unto the land of the Philistines, and to the border of Egypt.

And the king made silver in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar trees made he as the sycomore trees that are in the low plains in abundance.

And they brought unto Solomon horses out of Egypt, and out of all lands [[2Chron. 9:26-28](#)].

Solomon was one of the great rulers of this world.

Death Of Solomon (9:29-31)

Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat?

And Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years.

And Solomon slept with his fathers, and he was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead [[2Chron. 9:29-31](#)].

God had fulfilled His promise to Solomon. He had given him supernatural wisdom for which he had asked, and in addition He had given him riches and wealth and honor.

CHAPTERS 10--12

Chapter 10

THEME: The division of the kingdom under Rehoboam

We have come now to the second and final division of the Book of 2 Chronicles. The first nine chapters were devoted to the reign of Solomon. Now Solomon is dead, and his son Rehoboam comes to the throne. The stupidity of Rehoboam leads to the division of the kingdom. The northern kingdom, composed of ten tribes, becomes known as Israel. The southern kingdom of two tribes takes the name of Judah. God puts the emphasis on the kingdom of Judah because this is the line of David which leads to Christ. In this section of the nation's history are five periods of revival. These are enlarged upon in Chronicles, as we are seeing them from God's viewpoint.

Rehoboam Comes To The Throne (10:1-19)

And Rehoboam went to Shechem: for to Shechem were all Israel come to make him king.

And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was in Egypt, whither he had fled from the presence of Solomon the king, heard it, that Jeroboam returned out of Egypt [[2Chron. 10:1-2](#)].

The Book of 2 Chronicles does not tell us this, but back in Kings we are told that this man Jeroboam had attempted to lead a rebellion even before the death of Solomon. He was forced to flee for his life and had gone down into the land of Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Solomon. Now he has returned with the intent of raising up a rebellion in the kingdom. If Rehoboam had been wise in his judgment and had been a little more mild and modest, he could have prevented the splitting of the kingdom; but he did not.

Now Jeroboam is back in the land, and we read:

And they sent and called him. So Jeroboam and all Israel came and spake to Rehoboam, saying,

Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore ease thou somewhat the grievous servitude of thy father, and his heavy yoke that he put upon us, and we will serve thee [[2Chron. 10:3-4](#)].

Taxes were the cause of the dissension. Probably the single thing that has caused more revolution and rebellion has been this matter of taxes. It has been the downfall of many nations. It brought the Roman Empire to its knees, and excessive taxation to support the royalty was responsible for the French Revolution. Also it produced the American Revolution. Taxation without representation brought about the Boston Tea Party and the incidents which led to the revolution. If our taxes keep going up as they are, we may have another tea party, because high taxation will ultimately wreck any nation. Unfortunately, our representatives in the state and national government don't seem to think that it is a problem. Taxes were the problem in Rehoboam's time. Solomon had carried on a tremendous building program. It was very impressive. Not only had he built the temple, but we are told in Kings that he built all sorts of palaces and buildings. Such a big building program had to be paid for, and as a result there had been an enormous increase in taxes. This gave Jeroboam a lever whereby he could make a protest. He gathered with Israel and said to Rehoboam, "Now look here, your father made our yoke grievous." Actually, Jeroboam was very mild in his approach. He said to Rehoboam that if he would reduce the taxes, he would go along with him. If Rehoboam had done that, there would not have been a rebellion.

And he said unto them, Come again unto me after three days. And the people departed [[2Chron. 10:5](#)].

What they had asked was really a fair thing. Rehoboam would have had an opportunity to look at the indebtedness and decide what was the wise thing to do. The wise thing would have been to reduce taxes.

And king Rehoboam took counsel with the old men that had stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, saying, What counsel give ye me to return answer to this people?

And they spake unto him, saying, If thou be kind to this people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be thy servants for ever.

But he forsook the counsel which the old men gave him, and took counsel with the young men that were brought up with him, that stood before him [[2Chron. 10:6-8](#)].

Rehoboam definitely showed poor judgment. He should have followed the wisdom of the older men who had been counselors during the reign of Solomon. They knew the situation. Unfortunately, he turned to the young men.

And the young men that were brought up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou answer the people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou it somewhat lighter for us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins.

For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions [[2Chron. 10:10-11](#)].

The young men advised, "Don't ease up. We want this picnic to continue. All of us have public jobs, and those of us who are not eating out of the public trough would like very much to get in the trough. Don't reduce the taxes. Increase them!" This was probably the most foolish thing that young Rehoboam could have done.

The older men conceded that Solomon did overtax the people. They advised that it was time to stop the building program. It was time to put a lid on all the government spending. The time had come to reduce taxes.

By the way, have you ever heard of any government which has reduced taxes? Our politicians go into office saying they will reduce taxes. I think in my lifetime I have voted for half a dozen presidents and every one of them was going to reduce taxes. I have been voting for governors and for mayors, and they all promise to reduce the taxes. Yet our taxes continue to increase.

Rehoboam will follow this policy also.

So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, saying, Come again to me on the third day.

And the king answered them roughly; and king Rehoboam forsook the counsel of the old men,

And answered them after the advice of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add thereto: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions [[2Chron. 10:12-14](#)].

Rehoboam delivers verbatim to the people the heartless and insensitive judgment of the young men.

So the king hearkened not unto the people: for the cause was of God, that the LORD might perform his word, which he spake by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat [[2Chron. 10:15](#)].

The prophecy to which this refers is given in [1Kings 11:9-39](#).

And when all Israel saw that the king would not hearken unto them, the people answered the king, saying, What portion have we in David? and we have none inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to your tents, O Israel, and now, David, see to thine own house. So all Israel went to their tents [[2Chron. 10:16](#)].

Israel refers to the ten tribes. Judah refers to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. However, the name Israel sometimes will refer to the southern kingdom also because God regards them as one people.

But as for the children of Israel that dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them.

Then king Rehoboam sent Hadoram that was over the tribute; and the children of Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. But king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem.

And Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day [[2Chron. 10:17-19](#)].

King Rehoboam sent a tax gatherer to gather taxes and the people stoned him to death. Rehoboam just hadn't realized how incensed these people were. So Israel rebelled against the house of David. "Unto this day" means up to the time when 2 Chronicles was written.

Chapter 11

Early Days Of Rehoboam's Reign (11:1-23)

When Rehoboam goes back to Jerusalem, he finds that his kingdom has really been cut down by quite a bit. Then he does another foolish thing.

And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he gathered of the house of Judah and Benjamin an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam [[2Chron. 11:1](#)].

First Rehoboam lost part of his kingdom by his own folly. Now he is doing another foolish thing by attempting internal warfare. He wants a civil war in Israel.

But the word of the LORD came to Shemiah the man of God, saying,

Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying,

Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren: return every man to his house: for this thing is done of me. And they obeyed the words of the LORD, and returned from going against Jeroboam [[2Chron. 11:2-4](#)].

God intervenes and prevents a civil war.

And he fortified the strong holds, and put captains in them, and store of victual, and of oil and wine.

And in every several city he put shields and spears, and made them exceeding strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side [[2Chron. 11:11-12](#)].

Now Rehoboam turns his attention to the building of fortifications to protect himself from the northern kingdom. That which had been part of the kingdom of David and Solomon is now lost to him and becomes his enemy because of his very foolish decision to listen to the young men rather than to the wise counselors of Solomon.

And the priests and the Levites that were in all Israel resorted to him out of all their coasts [[2Chron. 11:13](#)].

You remember that the Levites had been given certain cities throughout Israel but that they had no territory as a tribe such as the other tribes had been given. Now the Levites leave all their cities in the northern kingdom, and all the priests and Levites move south to Judah and Jerusalem.

For the Levites left their suburbs and their possession, and came to Judah and Jerusalem: for Jeroboam and his sons had cast them off from executing the priest's office unto the LORD:

And he ordained him priests for the high places, and for the devils [demons], and for the calves which he had made [[2Chron. 11:14-15](#)].

All the priests and Levites who lived up in the northern kingdom moved south so that they could continue to serve at the temple. Then Jeroboam institutes demon worship. The record in Kings gives us more detail: "If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan" ([1Kings 12:27-29](#)). The people worshiped the golden calves. Back of all this idolatry is Satan. This is Satan worship.

I had the privilege of visiting the places of the seven churches of Asia. You will recall that the Lord said to the church at Pergamos, "I know thy works and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is . . ." ([Rev. 2:13](#)). That was a city given over to idolatry. Behind idolatry is Satan. Demonism manifests itself in many different ways.

And after them out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the LORD God of Israel came to Jerusalem, to sacrifice unto the LORD God of their fathers.

So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong, three years: for three years they walked in the way of David and Solomon [[2Chron. 11:16-17](#)].

There were some folk in the ten northern tribes who were still faithful to God, and they would come down to Jerusalem to worship.

Now we are told something of Rehoboam's personal life:

And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.)

And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, to be ruler among his brethren: for he thought to make him king.

And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and

he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives
[[2Chron. 11:21-23](#)].

Because the record of his many wives appears in the Bible, a great many folk assume that God approves of polygamy. No. God records this to let us know that He does not approve of it. This man Rehoboam did wrong by not listening to the counselors of Solomon but listening to the young men instead. He was wrong in trying to start a civil war. He was wrong in having many wives. This is recorded because it is history; it is what he did. It is one of the many things for which God judged him.

Chapter 12

Rehoboam's Apostasy (12:1)

In the life of Rehoboam one sin led to another. Now we see that he leads his people in apostasy.

And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him [[2Chron. 12:1](#)].

God did not approve of Rehoboam's conduct. People read the things these men did in the Old Testament, and they say, "Look what they did and they got by with it." That is often said about Abraham when he took Hagar and had the boy Ishmael. Friends, he didn't get by with it. Do you know who is the big problem in the Middle East today? The sons of Abraham -- the Israelites and the Arabs. Who is the Arab? Well, I had an Arab guide take me down to the city of Jericho. I wanted someone who knew about the place, and this was a brilliant fellow who had worked with Sir Charles Marsdon and Miss Kathleen Kenyon in their excavations. He was very helpful to me. We were talking about the land, and I made the statement that God had given it to Abraham and to his offspring. This Arab smiled and looked me straight in the eye and said, "Dr. McGee, I am as much a son of Abraham as any Jew who is alive today." And he was right! He could trace his ancestry right back to Ishmael. He boasted of the fact that he was an Ismaelite, a son of Abraham. Did God approve when Abraham took Hagar? God records it as history. Then He lets you see the results. It certainly has never been a blessing. In fact, it has been a thorn in the flesh down through the centuries.

Now God records the apostasy of Jeroboam. Also He records the forsaking of the Law by Rehoboam and Israel. God condemns these things, but He records them as history.

Invasion Of Egypt (12:2-16)

Now God's judgment falls upon Rehoboam. For the first time He opens up that southern kingdom to the invasion of a major nation. You see, Rehoboam had forsaken the Word of God; he had led his people in apostasy. When he did this, God did something He had not done before. Previous to this, God had put a wall around His people, and the great nations of that day were not permitted to invade that territory.

And it came to pass, that in the fifth year of king Rehoboam Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD.

With twelve hundred chariots, and threescore thousand horsemen:
and the people were without number that came with him out of
Egypt: the Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians [[2Chron.
12:2-3](#)].

First, Shishak king of Egypt came up and carried away great booty. He lugged away a great deal of the gold and other wealth of that kingdom.

So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house; he took all: he carried away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made.

Instead of which king Rehoboam made shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the chief of the guard, that kept the entrance of the king's house.

And when the king entered into the house of the LORD, the guard came and fetched them, and brought them again into the guard chamber [[2Chron. 12:9-11](#)].

These, you recall, are the great shields of gold that David brought and that Solomon placed in the temple. After these had been captured as booty, Rehoboam substitutes something inferior. No longer do they have shields of gold; now they have shields of brass. The judgment of God is upon them because of their sins.

This was a humbling experience for Rehoboam. He had been brought up in the affluence of the reign of Solomon and had experienced the blessing that had come. He had known nothing but wealth and luxury and expected it to go on forever. He begins to realize there may be an end to the glory of the kingdom of Solomon.

And when he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, that he would not destroy him altogether; and also in Judah things went well [[2Chron. 12:12](#)].

This reveals the amazing mercy of God. When this man humbles himself, God immediately withdraws judgment upon him and the people of Judah.

So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned: for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess [[2Chron. 12:13](#)].

It is interesting to learn who was Rehoboam's mother. You recall that David had been very friendly with the Ammonites -- although they had made war against him. Now we find that Rehoboam, his grandson, was the son of an Ammonite woman. She undoubtedly had something to do with the character of this man. As we saw in the Book of Kings, God always mentions the mother's name. Why? Because she bears part of the responsibility for her son. If he turns out well, she shares in the credit. If he turns out to be a wicked, evil king, she must take part of the blame.

And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.

Now the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? And there were wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continually.

And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David: and Abijah his son reigned in his stead [[2Chron. 12:14-16](#)].

Chapter 13

THEME: Abijah reigns over Judah

After Rehoboam's death, his son Abijah came to the throne. Although Abijah is not considered a good king, and the record in 1Kings says that ". . . he walked in all the sins of his father . . . and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God . . ." ([1Kings 15:3](#)), yet here in Chronicles we read of an episode during which he honored the Lord.

And Abijah set the battle in array with an army of valiant men of war, even four hundred thousand chosen men: Jeroboam also set the battle in array against him with eight hundred thousand chosen men, being mighty men of valour.

And Abijah stood up upon mount Zemaraim, which is in mount Ephraim, and said, Hear me, thou Jeroboam, and all Israel;

Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?

Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, is risen up, and hath rebelled against his lord [[2Chron. 13:3-6](#)].

As we have seen, there was a reason for that, a sufficient reason: the foolishness of Rehoboam.

And there are gathered unto him vain men, the children of Belial, and have strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was young and tenderhearted, and could not withstand them [[2Chron. 13:7](#)].

He was not only young and tenderhearted, but he was very foolish.

This is the plea on the part of Abijah to try to bring back the ten tribes, but there is no use now because Jeroboam has made himself king, and he is not about to make peace.

But Jeroboam caused an ambushment to come about behind them: so they were before Judah, and the ambushment was behind them.

And when Judah looked back, behold, the battle was before and behind: and they cried unto the LORD, and the priests sounded with the trumpets [[2Chron. 13:13-14](#)].

They cry unto God for help. Now notice God's gracious response.

Then the men of Judah gave a shout: and as the men of Judah shouted, it came to pass, that God smote Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah.

And the children of Israel fled before Judah: and God delivered them into their hand.

And Abijah and his people slew them with a great slaughter: so there fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men [[2Chron. 13:15-17](#)].

This is a great victory.

And Abijah pursued after Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Beth-el with the towns thereof, and Jeshanah with the towns thereof, and Ephraim with the towns thereof.

Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Abijah: and the LORD struck him, and he died [[2Chron. 13:19-20](#)].

This is God's judgment upon Jeroboam for dividing the nation.

But Abijah waxed mighty, and married fourteen wives, and begat twenty and two sons, and sixteen daughters.

And the rest of the acts of Abijah, and his ways, and his sayings, are written in the story of the prophet Iddo [[2Chron. 13:21-22](#)].

Abijah was no great king, but after him comes his son who will lead the first revival.

Chronological Table of the Kings of the Divided Kingdom

judah

King Reign Character Prophet

1. Rehoboam 931-913 B.C. (17 yrs.) Bad Shemaiah
2. Abijah 913-911 (3 yrs.) Bad
3. Asa 911-870 (41 yrs.) Good
4. Jehoshaphat 870-848* (25 yrs.) Good
5. Jehoram 848-841* (8 yrs.) Bad
6. Ahaziah 841 (1 yr.) Bad
7. Athaliah 841-835 (6 yrs.) Bad
8. Joash 835-796 (40 yrs.) Good Joel
9. Amaziah 796-767 (29 yrs.) Good
10. Azariah 767-740* (52 yrs.) Good Isaiah
(or Uzziah)
11. Jotham 740-732* (16 yrs.) Good Micah

12. Ahaz 732-716 (16 yrs.) Bad
13. Hezekiah 716-687 (29 yrs.) Good
14. Manasseh 687-642* (55 yrs.) Bad Nahum
15. Amon 642-640 (2 yrs.) Bad
- Habakkuk
16. Josiah 640-608 (31 yrs.) Good Zephaniah
- Jeremiah
17. Jehoahaz 608 (3 mo.) Bad
18. Jehoiakim 608-597 (11 yrs.) Bad
19. Jehoiachin 597 (3 mo.) Bad
20. Zedekiah 597-586 (11 yr.) Bad

(Destruction of Jerusalem and captivity of Judah)

*Co-regency

Chronological Table of the Kings of the Divided Kingdom

Israel

King Reign Character Prophet

1. Jeroboam I 931-910 B.C. (22 yrs.) Bad Ahijah
2. Nadab 910-909 (2 yrs.) Bad
3. Baasha 909-886 (24 yrs.) Bad
4. Elah 886-885 (2 yrs.) Bad
5. Zimri 885 (7 days) Bad
6. Omri 885-874* (12 yrs.) Bad
- Elijah
7. Ahab 874-853 (22 yrs.) Bad Micaiah
8. Ahaziah 853-852 (2 yrs.) Bad
9. Joram 852-841 (12 yrs.) Bad Elisha
10. Jehu 841-814 (28 yrs.) Bad
11. Jehoahaz 814-798 (17 yrs.) Bad
12. Jehoash 798-782 (16 yrs.) Bad
- Jonah
13. Jeroboam II 782-753* (41 yrs.) Bad Amos
- Hosea
14. Zechariah 753-752 (6 mo.) Bad
15. Shallum 752 (1 mo.) Bad
16. Menahem 752-742 (10 yrs.) Bad
17. Pekahiah 742-740 (2 yrs.) Bad
18. Pekah 740-732* (20 yrs.) Bad
19. Hoshea 732-721 (9 yrs.) Bad

(Capture of Samaria and captivity of Israel)

*Co-regency

CHAPTERS 14--16

Chapter 14

THEME: Revival under Asa, king of Judah

During the reign of Asa we will come to the first revival. I believe that God has given us a lesson on revival in this book. The road to revival is a rocky, unpaved, uphill road. However, the road is well-marked, the road maps are clear, and there are certain bridges that must be crossed.

Asa is one of the five kings whom God used to bring revival to the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom never had a revival. They had nineteen kings, and all of them were bad. There's not one good one in the lot. Of the twenty kings over Judah, ten of them could be called good, and five of them were outstanding. These kings were Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah. During their reigns there was a period of reformation, which was incubated in a time of revival. There is a similarity among all the kings, but there are also some striking differences.

So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years [[2Chron. 14:1](#)].

Asa is the first of the kings in whose reign there was a revival. Solomon was his great-grandfather, Rehoboam was his grandfather, and, of course, Abijah was his father.

And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:

For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves:

And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment [[2Chron. 14:2-4](#)].

Here is the character of the man. He is absolutely outstanding.

Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the images: and the kingdom was quiet before him.

And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest [[2Chron. 14:5-6](#)].

He was also a man of peace. However, we find that Ethiopia made war against him.

And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah.

Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah [[2Chron. 14:9-10](#)].

Not only was Asa a man of peace, he was also a man of prayer. We have a glimpse into the private life of the king, and it is commendable.

And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.

So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah: and the Ethiopians fled [[2Chron. 14:11-12](#)].

This is real praying. It is not flowery, but direct and right to the point. He says exactly what he means. Asa was a great man of prayer. The revival that came to the nation came because he was this kind of a king.

They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem [[2Chron. 14:15](#)].

God gave Asa a great military victory.

Chapter 15

Encouragement Of Azariah, The Prophet (15:1-17)

On the road to revival there are three bridges which must be crossed. We come now to the first bridge, which is a knowledge of the Word of God.

And the spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded:

And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin: The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.

Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law [[2Chron. 15:1-3](#)].

The tragedy of the hour in our day is that there is not enough Bible teaching in the church. I say this very kindly, but we do not need more preachers. You can buy them like bananas, by the dozen. Bible teachers are few and far between; yet they are needed. And they were needed in Asa's day. They did not have a teaching priest. They had priests and Levites -- they were knee-deep in priests and Levites -- but they did not have a teaching priest. Consequently they were without the Law, without the Word of God.

But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them [[2Chron. 15:4](#)].

It's just that simple, and yet it is just that complicated.

My friend, if you mean business with God, God will mean business with you. I hear people say, "Oh, I try to study. I try to pray. I try to do this but I don't get anywhere." My friend, who are you kidding? May I say to you that when you say that, you make God a liar. I have news for you -- God is no liar. God says, "If you seek Me, I am there." If you mean business with God, God will mean business with you. Oh, search your heart, my friend. If you really want to know God's Word, then God is ready to meet you any time you are ready.

And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries.

And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity.

Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded [[2Chron. 15:5-7](#)].

Asa is beginning to turn to God. This prophet encourages him in this, and he explains why they had had trouble and so many problems.

Now I strongly suspect that the prophet's message applies to us as well as to Judah. I'm not speaking ex cathedra but, in studying the Word of God and seeing how God dealt with these people here, I am wondering if the root of our national problems is not the same. We have all those smart boys in Washington, and they make stupid decisions. How can such smart boys make such stupid decisions? Why is it that we cannot have law and order? Why is it that we can't really have peace? Why is there such lawlessness today? Let me venture my opinion on the basis of the Word of God. It is because God has been left out. He is not in the government circles in Washington. They think they don't need God because they have the smart boys. My friend, in this hour in which we are living, our nation needs God!

And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that was before the porch of the LORD.

And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him [[2Chron. 15:8-9](#)].

God always has a remnant that will turn to Him.

So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.

And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.

And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul [[2Chron. 15:10-12](#)].

You will notice that these people are crossing the first bridge. They are not trying to detour around it. They have come to a knowledge of God's Word. They are turning to God and seeking Him with all their heart and soul. This characterized every one of the revivals. There was a return to the Word of God.

I am bold enough to state dogmatically that there has never been a revival without a return to the Word of God. There is no detour around the Bible. There is no substitute for

it. The great spiritual movement in the days of John Wesley, my friend, was built around the Word of God. Wesley read the Bible in three languages every morning! Dwight L. Moody and the great spiritual awakening in his day led to the great Bible institute movement, one of the greatest movements in the study of the Word. It is dying out in our day. Why? Because they are getting away from the Word of God. We need more than just a superficial familiarity with the Word of God. We need more than an artificial vocabulary of the right words. Revival does not depend on an activity, nor on a service, nor on a method. It requires a real knowledge and love of the Word of God.

In our contemporary society there are movements and there are evangelists whom God is using, but I am disturbed because they are not making the study of the Word of God paramount. I find it difficult to get these movements, and even some of our schools, interested in studying the entire Word of God. My friend, we cannot have a real revival unless it is based on a thorough knowledge of the Bible. I hope revival will come. I believe this is the first bridge on the route. We'll have to cross over this bridge first.

Now at this great assembly which Asa had called in Jerusalem, they entered into a covenant with God to seek Him with all their hearts.

That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.

And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets [[2Chron. 15:13-14](#)].

This was making it very harsh; yet there was a ready response from the hearts of the people. This man Asa brought about many reforms at this time.

And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about [[2Chron. 15:15](#)].

My friend, if you seek the Lord with your whole heart, He will be found of you.

We have seen that the first bridge to revival is a knowledge of the Word of God. Now we come to the second bridge which is scriptural separation. The word separation is one of the most abused words in Christian circles. Asa here is practicing scriptural separation:

And also concerning Maachah the mother of Asa the king, he removed her from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron [[2Chron. 15:16](#)].

This is indeed interesting -- his own mother was engaged in idolatry! Notice that she wasn't just a friend of people who were idolaters, but she herself was an idolater. This is the reason Asa removed her from the place of influence.

But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days [[2Chron. 15:17](#)].

Asa could have removed these high places, but he did not. He went only part way with God -- and yet God used him. How gracious God is!

I am weary of folk who consider themselves separated and roundly criticize everyone else in the ministry whose methods are different from theirs. My friend, that is not scriptural separation at all. Separation is not an attempt to straighten out every individual and try to force men whom God is using to conform to your pattern. That is the narrowest form of bigotry. I feel that some folk ought to get separated from themselves -- that would really be separation! If you want revival, the place to begin is with yourself. I suggest that you get in a room by yourself, draw a circle right around you, and say, "Lord, begin a revival, and let it start inside this circle."

Chapter 16

Asa's Lapse Of Faith (16:1-14)

In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah [[2Chron. 16:1](#)].

We have read in several verses that people from the northern kingdom would move to Judah because they saw that there was a revival going on under Asa. Baasha wanted to keep his people in his own kingdom and didn't want them to be moving south to Judah.

Then Asa brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-hadad king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying,

There is a league between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold: go, break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me [[2Chron. 16:2-3](#)].

Israel became a formidable enemy to Asa and Judah. So what does Asa do? He turns to a former ally that he had, King Ben-hadad of Syria. And what did that indicate? It indicated a lack of faith in God.

And Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali [[2Chron. 16:4](#)].

The king of Syria responded and sent in his troops.

And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.

Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah [[2Chron. 16:5-6](#)].

The maneuver was successful, but now the Lord has something to say to Asa.

And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and

not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.

Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars [[2Chron. 16:7-9](#)].

Why did God send a prophet to Asa to rebuke him? Why does God judge Asa? It is for his lack of faith.

The third bridge we must cross for revival is faith in God -- not faith in methods, nor in man, nor in a church, nor in a system, nor in an organization. Revival requires faith in God.

When Baasha came against Asa in civil war, Asa turned to Ben-hadad of Syria, the ancient enemy. Hanani reminded him that he had every evidence that God would deliver him. God had delivered into his hand the army of the Ethiopians and the Lubims. Yet at this crisis point Asa demonstrated a lack of faith.

We need to clearly understand that although there is one act of faith which saves us -- that is justification is by faith; the moment we put our trust in Jesus Christ, we are saved - - life does not end when we are saved. My friend, we are to live by faith. Paul wrote to the Roman believers, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Then he uses one of the strangest expressions imaginable: "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" ([Rom. 1:16-17](#)). What does it mean that therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith? It means we are saved by faith, and we are to live by faith.

Hanani said to Asa, "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him." This means that God is looking for a man or a woman who will believe in Him. By the way, would you like to be that person who believes God? I don't mean you are to become a fanatic, but you can believe God on the good solid testimony of His Word. Do you know that you cannot possibly please God unless you believe Him? "But without faith it is impossible to please him . . ." ([Heb. 11:6](#)). The writer to the Hebrews also tells us that we are compassed about with a great cloud of witnesses. Because of this, ". . . let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us. . . ." What is the sin? Unbelief. ". . . and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" ([Heb. 12:1](#)). Let's not only be saved by faith, my friend, let's live by faith. Many folk claim to be Christians, yet they live like agnostics.

Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him in a prison house; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time [[2Chron. 16:10](#)].

This is amazing! Asa will not accept the rebuke. Why? Because he didn't believe it. Neither did he have real faith and dependence on God.

Living without God means spiritual death for us. There could be no way in the world for us to be used of God.

Now we will see that God struck him with a disease.

And Asa in the thirty and ninth years of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians [[2Chron. 16:12](#)].

God struck him with a disease which was serious and then became critical. He turned to the physicians. There is nothing wrong in that. The point is that he didn't turn to God in all of this. It is just as important for a believer to go to God when he gets sick as it is to call the doctor. Not only do I believe that, but I am a walking proof that God is faithful. When it was discovered that I had cancer, I not only went to the doctor, I went to God in prayer. I didn't go to a so-called faith healer. I went to the Great Physician. When you get sick, there are two things you ought to do: you should call the doctor and you should call upon God. Probably the most practical writer in the New Testament said, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" ([James 5:14](#)). He said two things should be done. The first was prayer, turning to God, calling on the name of the Lord. The second was anointing the sick one with oil. Now that was not a ceremonial act, not a religious act; it was medicinal. He was saying they should call on the Lord and call the doctor. That is practical.

The difficulty with Asa was that he called the doctor, but he didn't call on the Lord. It is amazing and very sobering to see a man who had experienced revival but now is not walking with God and is not living by faith.

My friend, to live by faith is to have faith in God. It means we take our problems and our difficulties to the Lord and turn them over to Him. It is a faith that accepts whatever answer He gives us because He hears and answers our prayers in His own way. He may not answer in our way, but He will answer according to His will. You can be sure of one thing: if you turn things over to Him, you will be in His will. If you are in His will, that is the very best answer you can get -- lots better than what you may have asked for.

And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.

And they buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art: and they made a very great burning for him [[2Chron. 16:13-14](#)].

They burned a lot of candles for him.

During Asa's reign Judah experienced a touch of revival. He went only part way with God, and yet God used him.

CHAPTERS 17--20

Chapter 17

THEME: Revival during Jehoshaphat's reign

This section records the second great revival period. It was much greater than the revival of Asa. Jehoshaphat, the son of Asa, was a man marvelously used of God. Remember that Chronicles gives God's viewpoint of the period of the kings and records what God considers important during the reigns of these men.

And Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead, and strengthened himself against Israel [[2Chron. 17:1](#)].

That is, he strengthened the kingdom of Judah against Israel, the northern kingdom.

And he placed forces in all the fenced cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of Judah, and in the cities of Ephraim, which Asa his father had taken [[2Chron. 17:2](#)].

You recall in the previous chapter we are told of war between Judah and Israel. Jehoshaphat is taking precautions to protect his kingdom.

And the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the first ways of his father David, and sought not unto Baalim [[2Chron. 17:3](#)].

Notice that it says he walked in the "first ways" of his father -- not in the way David walked in his old age, but when he was a young king, trusted the Lord.

But sought to the LORD God of his father, and walked in his commandments, and not after the doings of Israel.

Therefore the LORD stablished the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents; and he had riches and honour in abundance [[2Chron. 17:4-5](#)].

In the Old Testament a sign of God's approval was material prosperity.

Teaching The Word (17:6-19)

And his heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.

Also in the third year of his reign he sent to his princes, even to Ben-hail, and to Obadiah, and to Zechariah, and to Nethaneel, and Michaiah, to teach in the cities of Judah.

And with them he sent Levites, even Shemaiah, and Nethaniah, and Zebadiah, and Asahel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehonathan, and Adonijah, and Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah, Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, priests.

And they taught in Judah, and had the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people [[2Chron. 17:6-9](#)].

Do you realize what Jehoshaphat did? He started a "Thru the Bible" program! Because I sign my name J. Vernon McGee, people ask me what the "J" stands for, and I generally give them some facetious answer. So I'll give you one: it stands for Jehoshaphat because he was the first one to start a "Thru the Bible" program. He sent out the Levites. Since they didn't have mechanical means of communication, they had to go out personally. Jehoshaphat sent them out by the hundreds and maybe even by the thousands. They spread throughout the entire kingdom teaching the Word of God. My friend, that is the way of revival.

Until the church gets back to the Word of God, there will be no real revival. All movements in or out of the church will come to naught unless they are anchored in the Word of God. There are wonderful things that are happening today. Some are inside the church; some are outside the organized church. If they are rooted in the Word of God, revival will be the result.

Now notice the reaction to the teaching of the Word of God.

And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.

Also some of the Philistines brought Jehoshaphat presents, and tribute silver; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand and seven hundred rams, and seven thousand and seven hundred he goats.

And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly; and he built in Judah castles, and cities of store [[2Chron. 17:10-12](#)].

Jehoshaphat had to build great storage places to house all the gifts that were brought to him. You see, this man was marvelously used of God. When revival came to Judah, it had its effect upon all the nations around them. The revival spread. Even the Philistines, who were the inveterate enemies of David, became friendly and sent gifts and silver for tribute to him. It even penetrated among the Arabian people. The Arabs sent flocks of animals to him.

You will also notice that there was no war against him. Spiritual revival is a cure for war. If a nation wishes to have peace, it must turn to God. That is God's method and always has been. If a nation is constantly at war, it is because that nation has turned away from God.

And he had much business in the cities of Judah: and the men of war, mighty men of valour, were in Jerusalem [[2Chron. 17:13](#)].

This was a time of peace, but Jehoshaphat kept an army for protection. The captains are listed in the next few verses. He is a great ruler. He has provided ample protection in case there should be an attack by the enemy, but God has given him peace.

These waited on the king, beside those whom the king put in the fenced cities throughout all Judah [[2Chron. 17:19](#)].

Jehoshaphat is a great man by all measurements. But now we see him doing something that is almost unbelievable.

Chapter 18

Jehoshaphat's Alliance With Ahab (18:1-33)

Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and joined affinity with Ahab [[2Chron. 18:1](#)].

Jehoshaphat teamed up with Ahab. He had fellowship with Ahab. I cannot think of two men more unlike than these two men.

And after certain years he went down to Ahab to Samaria. And Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance, and for the people that he had with him, and persuaded him to go up with him to Ramoth-gilead [[2Chron. 18:2](#)].

This seems unbelievable. It is one of the strangest partnerships on record in the pages of Scripture, or anywhere else. It is almost like saying that you could have day and night at the same time or that you can have light and darkness at the same time. How these two ever came together is a mystery. They have nothing in common spiritually. Jehoshaphat is one of the most godly kings personally, and he has been used to bring revival to his nation. He loves God, and he loves the Word of God. He is what we would call a spiritually minded man. On the other hand, Ahab is as godless as they come. He hates God. He has given himself over to idolatry and immorality. How can these two be buddy-buddy? How can they enjoy each other's company? What is it that they have in common? Well, let's do a little investigation here.

They had a threefold alliance and partnership. It is all based on material reasons, physical reasons. They had nothing in common spiritually.

1. There was a matrimonial alliance between the two. Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. This Athaliah was a bloody woman who walked in the ways of her parents. We have already seen that in the Books of Kings. I suppose these two men thought they could cement relations between Judah and Israel and bring about an undivided kingdom. They tried to do this by intermarrying. What they did was wrong.

This is also a significant spot in our contemporary culture. I may sound like an antiquated preacher to a lot of folk, but I must speak out on a subject which is clearly taught in the Word of God. Here in Southern California we lead the world in divorce rates. Although I am not an authority in this field, there is one area on which I can speak loud and clear: a believer and an unbeliever -- a Christian and a non-Christian -- should not get married under any circumstances. Here the son of Jehoshaphat, hot out of a revival, marries that cold-blooded daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. That brought tragedy. In fact, it almost exterminated the line of David.

There is more tragedy, more heartache and heartbreak, more broken lives, more maladjusted children over this one problem of broken homes than anything else I know about. It will not work for a professing Christian to marry one who is not a Christian. If two non-Christian people get married and one is converted after they have married, that is a different situation. The apostle Paul writes specifically about that situation. However, God has much to say against a Christian deliberately walking into the trap of marrying a non-Christian -- and it is a trap.

2. Jehoshaphat and Ahab had a market alliance. We are told that Jehoshaphat joined himself with Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, when he became king of Israel, and they sent ships to Tarshish. This is recorded in [1Kings 22](#) and also in [2Chronicles 20](#). The ships were sent for commerce in grain and gold. There was a shipwreck, and the cargo was lost. God could not bless this alliance.

3. Jehoshaphat and Ahab had a military alliance. Ahab was having problems with Syria; so he asked Jehoshaphat to enter into an alliance with him and go with him up to Ramoth-gilead. He gave a big feast for Jehoshaphat with sheep and oxen in abundance. And so he persuaded Jehoshaphat. Notice that Jehoshaphat is now sitting ". . . in the seat of the scornful" ([Ps. 1:1](#)). What the armies of the northern kingdom could not accomplish against the southern kingdom of Judah, Ahab accomplished by involving Jehoshaphat in a war with Syria. It reminds one of Chamberlain at Munich with Hitler and Mussolini. It reminds one of Yalta with Roosevelt and Churchill. It reminds one of Marshall in London. I'm sure there are alliances being made today, alliances which should never be made at all and which God cannot bless.

And Ahab king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat king of Judah, Wilt thou go with me to Ramoth-gilead? And he answered him, I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war [[2Chron. 18:3](#)].

Jehoshaphat is in the family of Ahab now by this intermarrying of their children. So he is willing to make an alliance and says, "We are one. We are together." Now remember, God had given Jehoshaphat peace. Ahab is asking him to go to war. Jehoshaphat agrees. And yet he is disturbed. He has a mind for God, and this situation gives him a certain amount of anxiety.

And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to-day [[2Chron. 18:4](#)].

Jehoshaphat says, "Let's find out what God has to say about this venture." So Ahab brings in his whole army of prophets.

Therefore the king of Israel gathered together of prophets four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for God will deliver it into the king's hand [[2Chron. 18:5](#)].

Who are these prophets? They are prophets of Baal!

Now Jehoshaphat has discernment enough to know there is something wrong here.

But Jehoshaphat said, Is there not here a prophet of the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him?

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, There is yet one man, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah the son of Imla. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so [[2Chron. 18:6-7](#)].

Jehoshaphat says, "You don't really mean that you hate him because he gives you the Word of God!" So Ahab agreed to send for him.

There are a lot of folk in our day also who hate a man who gives out the Word of God. In the church which I served for many years was a sign on the pulpit which I saw every time I stood there to speak. It read: "Sir, we would see Jesus." I like that. But I always felt there ought to be another verse of Scripture on the congregation's side of the pulpit: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" ([Gal. 4:16](#)).

Micaiah is one of the great men of the Bible, as we have seen in [1Kings 22](#). He was a man of God who gave out the Word of God. He told Ahab the truth at the peril of his own life. This man is now called on the scene.

And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah sat either of them on his throne, clothed in their robes, and they sat in a void place at the entering in of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them [[2Chron. 18:9](#)].

You can imagine those four hundred prophets running around saying to Ahab, "Go up against the king of Syria." One of them was especially dramatic. Zedekiah ran around with iron horns, pushing at everyone with them, saying, "This is the way you are going to do it!" What a scene -- two kings on their thrones and all those prophets running around crying, "Go up and fight. You'll win!"

And the messenger that went to call Micaiah spake to him, saying, Behold, the words of the prophets declare good to the king with one assent; let thy word therefore, I pray thee, be like one of theirs, and speak thou good [[2Chron. 18:12](#)].

The messenger tries to tip off Micaiah as to the situation he will face and advises him to get in step with the rest of them. He says all the prophets agree that they should go up to war so the smart thing for Micaiah to do is to agree with them. Maybe he even brought along a copy of How to Win Friends and Influence People. He told him to be sure to say the right thing to get on the good side of the king.

And Micaiah said, As the LORD liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak [[2Chron. 18:13](#)].

Micaiah is not intimidated. He is going to say what God has for him to say. You can be sure of that.

And when he was come to the king, the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?

And he said, Go ye up, and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand [[2Chron. 18:14](#)].

Micaiah does have a sense of humor. I enjoy that. I often say -- and I say it reverently -- that God has a sense of humor in the Bible. This is one instance of that.

Remember the scene. The two kings are sitting on their thrones. Four hundred men are running around saying, "Go up, go up." Now with biting sarcasm Micaiah joins the parade, and says, "Go up, go up."

And the king said to him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the LORD [[2Chron. 18:15](#)].

Ahab says to him, "Stop kidding me. You can't fool me. I know you don't agree with them." You see, Ahab wanted the Word of God, but he didn't want it. He knew the difference between truth and falsehood, but he didn't want to obey the truth. There are a lot of folk like that today.

Now Micaiah becomes serious. Here is God's message: Not only will they lose the battle, but Ahab will be slain.

Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace.

And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil? [[2Chron. 18:16-17](#)].

The king of Israel says to Jehoshaphat, "I told you so -- I told you he would predict nothing but evil unto me!"

Now Micaiah really lets him have it. He is serious now, and he is sarcastic. Oh, with what biting irony he gives this parable to Ahab!

Again he said, Therefore hear the word of the LORD; I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand and on his left.

And the LORD said, Who shall entice Ahab king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one spake saying after this manner, and another saying after that manner [[2Chron. 18:18-19](#)].

This is ridiculous! Can you imagine God calling a board of directors' meeting to find out what He should do? The Lord doesn't ask for advice, my friend. Oh, what biting sarcasm this is! There were all kinds of suggestions. Now there comes out a wee little spirit and says he has a good idea.

Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will entice him. And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith?

And he said, I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the LORD said, Thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail: go out, and do even so [[2Chron. 18:20-21](#)].

Micaiah's ridiculous parable is a subtle way of saying that all these prophets of Baal are a pack of liars!

Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil against thee [[2Chron. 18:22](#)].

In other words, these prophets have not been telling you the truth. God is going to judge you.

Now Ahab is not about to pay any attention to what Micaiah says. He gives orders to put him in prison and keep him there.

Then the king of Israel said, take ye Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son;

And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I return in peace [[2Chron. 18:25-26](#)].

Old Micaiah has the parting shot. Listen to him:

And Micaiah said, If thou certainly return in peace, then hath not the LORD spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, all ye people [[2Chron. 18:27](#)].

I love this! Before Micaiah was taken off, he said, "Look, if you come back, the Lord hasn't spoken by me. But you are not coming back." So he turns to the people, "He won't be here, but you will be here. Remember what I said!" This is tremendous!

So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead.

And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and will go to the battle; but put thou on thy robes. So the king of Israel disguised himself; and they went to the battle [[2Chron. 18:28-29](#)].

Ahab proved he was a deceiver all the way through. You see, the only man in the battle who was wearing royal robes was Jehoshaphat, which made him a marked man. Clever old Ahab had disguised himself. You might say that Ahab set Jehoshaphat up as a clay pigeon to be slain in the battle. It was not Jehoshaphat's fight at all, but he almost got killed!

Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots that were with him, saying, Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the king of Israel.

And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, It is the king of Israel. Therefore they compassed about him to fight: but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the

LORD helped him; and God moved them to depart from him
[[2Chron. 18:30-31](#)].

The only reason he came out alive is because God intervened on his behalf.

Old Ahab is feeling very satisfied with himself. Because of his cleverness he expects to come through the battle unscathed. But notice what happens.

And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: therefore he said to his chariot man, Turn thine hand, that thou mayest carry me out of the host; for I am wounded [[2Chron. 18:33](#)].

On the Syrian side there was a soldier who ended up with one arrow left in his quiver. "He drew his bow at a venture" -- he wasn't aiming at anything. But that arrow had old Ahab's name on it, and it got him. What happened? He died, just as Micaiah said he would.

Jehoshaphat went back home a sadder and wiser man.

Chapter 19

Jehoshaphat Rebuked For His Alliance (19:1-9)

As Jehoshaphat returns home, he is met by a prophet with a message from God.

And Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned to his house in peace to Jerusalem.

And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD [[2Chron. 19:1-2](#)].

"Shouldest thou help the ungodly?" is a very good question. It is something our generation, which has gone lovey-dovey on everything, should think about. My friend, God never asks you to love one who is an enemy of God. It is one thing to love a sinner. It is another thing to love his sin. We need to distinguish between the two. We are to hate the sinner's sin. If the sinner will not change, but persists and insists on sticking with his sin, there is no alternative, my beloved. There are people who are actually God's enemies, they are enemies of the Word of God, and they are inveterate enemies of Christianity. Years ago a very pious fellow said to me, "I pray for Joe Stalin." Well, I didn't, and I make no apology for it. Stalin was brought up in a school in which he was given some Bible teaching. He had an opportunity to know God. Yet he turned into an avowed enemy of God. I do not believe God expected us to pray for him. I don't feel that this lovey-dovey hypocrisy is honoring to God. I have had folk tell me how much they love me. Several have been very extravagant in their statements, and they were the ones I found out who were not even my friends. God cannot honor this hypocritical position of running around mouthing that we love everybody when really there are only a very few people whom we do love. We are to love God's people; this is His command. And we are to love the sinner in the sense that we should try to bring him to Christ. However, this does not mean that we are to compromise with sin!

There is another tremendous lesson here that I don't want us to miss. God did not send Jehu to Jehoshaphat before he went up to join himself with Ahab and Jezebel. At that time He did not send him to give him a little message on separation. Jehoshaphat was a man of God. He made his mistakes. God allowed him to go through this experience with Ahab because God was going to teach him a lesson from this.

We have a great many people today who have made themselves to be like God's spiritual policemen. They like to tell everybody else how they should be separated and with whom they should associate and with whom they should not associate. God makes it very clear that we are not to judge others in questionable matters. Remember that people are not coming before us in judgment anyway. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" ([Rom. 14:4](#)). We fall into the error of criticizing others because they are not as separated as we think they should be. You see, God is able to make him stand. If he has a personal faith in Jesus Christ, God will hold him. I would like to put it like this. I must give an account some day for my life to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my Master. You are not. In the same way, I am not your master. The Lord Jesus Christ is your Master. You will give your account to Him. The fact that I will some day give an account to the Lord Jesus Christ keeps me plenty busy. I don't have time to sit in judgment on you, and I trust that you do not have the time to sit in judgment on me. It is not our business; it is His business. God will rebuke me if I do the wrong thing. That's what he did for Jehoshaphat. He taught him through this experience and Jehoshaphat learned his lesson.

Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God [[2Chron. 19:3](#)].

Jehoshaphat was a remarkable man, but the marriage of his son into the family of Ahab brought judgment from God upon him and his nation, as we shall see.

And Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem: and he went out again through the people from Beer-sheba to mount Ephraim, and brought them back unto the LORD God of their fathers [[2Chron. 19:4](#)].

Now we will see some of the reforms that Jehoshaphat engaged in here. He was a wonderful man.

And he set judges in the land throughout all the fenced cities of Judah, city by city,

And said to the judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for man, but for the LORD, who is with you in the judgment.

Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts [[2Chron. 19:5-7](#)].

In my judgment, this is the entire difficulty with our legal system today. When a godless man sits on the judge's bench, he does not feel a responsibility to God. He is a dangerous

judge, regardless of who he is. He is a dangerous judge because he is subject to all these vices. To begin with, he is apt to make a wrong judgment. Also he is apt to show respect of persons, and may be led to take a bribe.

Moreover in Jerusalem did Jehoshaphat set of the Levites, and of the priests, and of the chief of the fathers of Israel, for the judgment of the LORD, and for controversies, when they returned to Jerusalem.

And he charged them, saying, Thus shall ye do in the fear of the LORD, faithfully, and with a perfect heart [[2Chron. 19:8-9](#)].

You see how Jehoshaphat organized everything in his kingdom around God.

Chapter 20

Invasion By Enemy Nations (20:1-5)

It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle.

Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazon-tamar, which is Engedi.

And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah [[2Chron. 20:1-3](#)].

You see, now this man has a normal reaction: he is afraid. He goes to God in prayer and sends word out to his people to join him in fasting and prayer.

And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the LORD: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court [[2Chron. 20:4-5](#)].

Jehoshaphat's Prayer (20:6-13)

And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?

Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? [[2Chron. 20:6-7](#)].

Jehoshaphat is doing something that his father, Asa, did not do. Asa did not rest upon the experiences of the past, which would have given him faith. Jehoshaphat, knowing what God has promised in the past and what God has done in the past, now rests upon the promises of God. He goes over this entire situation in his prayer to God and then he concludes his prayer:

O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.

And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children [[2Chron. 20:12-13](#)].

What a scene! What a king! He casts himself entirely upon God in a helpless situation. What a wonderful thing it is.

God's Answer (20:14-33)

Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation [[2Chron. 20:14](#)].

Notice how often genealogies are used in the Scripture to identify the prophets or some of the other men who are brought across the pages of the Bible. It is very important. I wonder if you know who your great-great-great-grandfather was. I haven't any idea who mine was. But these folk kept accurate genealogies.

Listen to the word of Jahaziel. He is God's spokesman now.

And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's [[2Chron. 20:15](#)].

I need to remind myself of this. It is easy for me to forget that the ministry God has given me is the Lord's. I go at it like it is mine; I begin to carry the burden and face the problems and worry about the difficulties. Every now and then I have to remind myself that this is God's work. And since it is His (I say this reverently), He will have to work out the problems. The secret of prayer is to go to God in faith. As the hymn has it, "Take your burden to the Lord, and leave it there." The trouble with me is that I don't leave it there. I spread my problems out before the Lord, then I sack them up, put them right back on my back, and go on carrying them.

Oh, how wonderful God is! He says, "Don't be afraid, Jehoshaphat. The battle is not yours -- you couldn't fight it; it is Mine." I find myself -- and I'm sure you do also -- in situations from which I cannot extricate myself. God says, "Turn it over to Me. I'll take care of it." Oh, that you and I might learn to turn it over to Him as Jehoshaphat did!

And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper [[2Chron. 20:20](#)].

Now they are going out to meet the advancing enemy. Jehoshaphat encourages his troops to put their trust in the Lord.

God is saying to you and me, "Believe in Me. Rest in Me and believe My Word." Don't listen to what Mr. Ph.D. has to say; listen to what God has to say. "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever [[2Chron. 20:21](#)].

This is an unusual way to organize an army! He didn't get out his atom bomb; he just organized a choir to go ahead and praise the Lord -- for His mercy endureth forever.

This whole chapter is thrilling to read. Now notice what happened. The Lord gave them the victory. God won the battle for them.

And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the LORD: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day [[2Chron. 20:26](#)].

Berachah is a name which has been taken by several churches in this country. It is a good name for a church, by the way. It means "the place to bless the Lord" or "the place to praise the Lord." Every church ought to be a Berachah church.

Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the LORD had made them to rejoice over their enemies.

And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the LORD.

And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they heard that the LORD fought against the enemies of Israel.

So the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet: for his God gave him rest round about [[2Chron. 20:27-30](#)].

It is God who gives rest and peace. Our nation hasn't learned that. We think if we make this kind of an alignment, this kind of treaty, we won't have to fight in war. Well, we have fought two world wars in order to bring peace in the world and all we have is war. Do you know why? Because God hasn't given us peace. Our world is not trusting the Prince of Peace. This is the reason.

The chapter ends with the market alliance Jehoshaphat had with the son of Ahab, to which we have already referred. God could not bless this alliance with the ungodly son of Ahab.

Although Jehoshaphat was a great king, he was not perfect. God says that he ". . . departed not from it, doing that which was right in the sight of the LORD" (see [v. 32](#)).

Howbeit the high places were not taken away: for as yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers [[2Chron. 20:33](#)].

Idolatry was the ultimate downfall of the nation.

CHAPTERS 21 AND 22

Chapter 21

THEME: Lapse into apostasy and sin

We come now to a section of the Word of God that in many senses is complicated. Sin is the reason for its complication because sin is always complicated. Let me illustrate this. If I say to you that I am holding in my hand a stick that is absolutely straight, you will know exactly how it looks because it can be straight in only one way. But suppose I say that I am holding a stick that is crooked. You would have no idea how it looks because a thing can be crooked in a million different ways. In just such a way, sin allures a great many folk because it is devious. It is enticing because it seems to be unusual and strange and it is complicated. We will see this in the life of Jehoram, who comes to the throne after the death of Jehoshaphat.

Jehoram's Evil Reign (21:1-11)

Now Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. And Jehoram his son reigned in his stead [[2Chron. 21:1](#)].

Jehoram happened to be the son who had married into the family of Ahab and Jezebel, and he learned to do evil from them. I think he was a very apt pupil, by the way.

And he had brethren the sons of Jehoshaphat, Azariah, and Jehiel, and Zechariah, and Azariah, and Michael, and Shephatiah: all these were the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.

And their father gave them great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah: but the kingdom gave he to Jehoram: because he was the firstborn.

Now when Jehoram was risen up to the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself, and slew all his brethren with the sword, and divers also of the princes of Israel [[2Chron. 21:2-4](#)].

He eliminated all the competition by the most dastardly means imaginable. He slew all his brothers and others of the royal family. Why did he do this?

And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD [[2Chron. 21:6](#)].

God does not bless mixed marriages, my friend.

Howbeit the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the covenant that he had made with David, and as he promised to give a light to him and to his sons for ever [[2Chron. 21:7](#)].

This man was so wicked that God would have been justified in exterminating the line. But, you see, God is faithful to His promises. He would not destroy the line of David because He had made a covenant with David.

Now we find that judgment immediately begins to come upon him.

In his days the Edomites revolted from under the dominion of Judah, and made themselves a king.

Then Jehoram went forth with his princes, and all his chariots with him: and he rose up by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him in, and the captains of the chariots.

So the Edomites revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. The same time also did Libnah revolt from under his hand; because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers [[2Chron. 21:8-10](#)].

God makes it very clear why this judgment came upon Jehoram. The Word says that this judgment was from the hand of God. He can't have peace because he has forsaken the Lord God of his fathers.

I get just a little impatient with people who say the Bible doesn't teach God's judgment on sin. What they really mean is that they don't believe the Bible. If they would say that, I would not find fault with them. What they believe is their business. But when they try to tell me that the Bible doesn't teach God's judgment, when it is as clear as it possibly can be, I object. God says He judges sin, and a great many of us can testify to the fact in our own lives.

Moreover he made high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to commit fornication, and compelled Judah thereto [[2Chron. 21:11](#)].

He actually pushed the people back into the idolatry from which his father, Jehoshaphat, had delivered them.

The Message Of Elijah (21:12-15)

Now God calls in an old friend whom you may have forgotten about. This is the man whom God always called in to deliver the difficult message. He was a troubleshooter, and he is the right man for the job. The man is Elijah.

And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah [[2Chron. 21:12](#)].

There are many people who speak of Elijah as one of the prophets who did not write. He is called one of the nonwriting prophets. Of course, this means that there is no book in the Bible named for him or written by him. Although he didn't write a book, he did write a message. And when this man Elijah wrote a message, it singed the paper! He began by citing the reason for this harsh message: "Because thou hast not walked in the ways of

Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah . . ." Now let's read the message.

But hast walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a-whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, which were better than thyself:

Behold, with a great plague will the LORD smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods:

And thou shalt have great sickness by disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day [[2Chron. 21:13-15](#)].

Elijah would be the prophet who could deliver a message like this. It is a harsh message but one that God wanted delivered to this man Jehoram.

The contents of the message are not unusual. This is the kind of message you would expect Elijah to deliver. However, the circumstances are extraordinary. It raises three questions: who? when? where? Let's first consider the "who?" -- who is Elijah? This message is directed to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat. The record in Kings tells us that Elijah was translated in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat. He was not on earth during the reign of Jehoram, and the assumption is that he could not write this prophecy. Some Bible students conclude that this is another Elijah, that he is not Elijah the Tishbite. That reminds me of the argument as to whether or not Shakespeare wrote the works of Shakespeare. As you know, some believe the author was Francis Bacon or someone else. I like Mark Twain's comment. He said, "Shakespeare did not write Shakespeare, but it was written by another man by the same name!" I consider that a conclusive answer in Elijah's case also. If this had not been Elijah the Tishbite, God would have made that clear. There is no impossible barrier, unless you reject the supernatural. If you do that, you will reject not only this but a great deal of the Bible. Our old friend, Elijah the prophet, is the one who wrote the message.

Now the second question is "when?" -- when did Elijah write it? Did he write it after his translation? Grotius maintains that the postmark was Paradise. Well, we can dismiss that as pure speculation. There is a very simple explanation: he wrote it before his translation. You may say, "But that's supernatural." Exactly. That is the point I am trying to make. Prophecy is supernatural. A prediction projects into the future; that's what makes it prophecy. We have many incidents of this. Isaiah spoke of Cyrus of Persia two centuries before he was even born. Daniel wrote of Alexander the Great. Elisha predicted the reign of Hazael over Syria. Micah named the town of Bethlehem as being the place where the Messiah would be born. Only God can prophesy with such accuracy.

The final question is "where?" -- where did Elijah write this prophecy? Elijah was a prophet to the northern kingdom. This is the only reference to Elijah in Chronicles, because Chronicles is giving God's viewpoint. Didn't God take delight in Elijah? Of course He did. Then why isn't Elijah mentioned in this book in more detail? It is not that God omitted Elijah and his work; God omits the whole history of the northern kingdom. Elijah was the prophet to the northern kingdom, and this is the only time Elijah spoke to a

king in the south. He never spoke to Jehoshaphat for the simple reason that Jehoshaphat was a good king and did not need one of the scorching messages from Elijah. Now when Jehoram, his son, comes to the throne, there is a message waiting for him. Elijah had written it before he was translated. Elijah not only left his mantle with Elisha, he left this message for Jehoram. He said, "You'll be seeing him; I won't."

This would suggest that when Elijah was translated, his message was not finished. It makes me believe that this man Elijah is one of the two witnesses mentioned in Revelation, chapter 11. He is going to deliver a harsh message again in a day when men have turned from God. I think this makes for a very intriguing passage of Scripture, with an unusual message delivered at this time.

What we find here is that when Jehoram came to the throne, he found a message on the front steps of the palace. It was thrown there by God's paperboy.

Judgment Falls On Jehoram (21:16-20)

Now we'll see the accuracy of Elijah's prediction.

Moreover the LORD stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines, and of the Arabians, that were near the Ethiopians:

And they came up into Judah, and brake into it, and carried away all the substance that was found in the king's house, and his sons also, and his wives; so that there was never a son left him, save Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons [[2Chron. 21:16-17](#)].

All of these had been at peace with both Asa and Jehoshaphat. Now their spirit is stirred up. War is coming. Why? War is the result of sin. We sometimes think of war as being made out on the battlefield. War takes place right at home, friends. It begins in the sinfulness of the human heart.

And after all this the LORD smote him in his bowels with an incurable disease.

And it came to pass, that in process of time, after the end of two years, his bowels fell out by reason of his sickness: so he died of sore diseases. And his people made no burning for him, like the burning of his fathers.

Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years, and departed without being desired. Howbeit they buried him in the city of David, but not in the sepulchres of the kings [[2Chron. 21:18-20](#)].

It was good riddance of bad rubbish when he died. The place in which they buried him and the lack of respect at his burial show how this man was hated. We will see in the next chapters that his wife was one of the most hated women who ever reigned.

Chapter 22

Ahaziah's Wicked Reign (22:1-9)

And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahaziah his youngest son king in his stead: for the band of men that came with the Arabians

to the camp had slain all the eldest. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah reigned [[2Chron. 22:1](#)].

The names get confusing because sometimes different names are used for the same person. Ahaziah is the Jehoahaz of [2Chronicles 21:17](#). He is the only son left. All the other sons of Jehoram were killed.

Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Athaliah the daughter of Omri.

He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab: for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.

Wherefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab: for they were his counsellors after the death of his father to his destruction [[2Chron. 22:2-4](#)].

Athaliah is really the queen on the throne. She is the power behind the throne. She is the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and the grand-daughter of Omri. She never really gave up her position. Remember that she turned her husband, Jehoram, away from God. Now her son, Ahaziah, listens to her and aligns himself with the northern kingdom and with the house of Ahab -- which was to his destruction. Justice with a vengeance will be wrought upon him.

He walked also after their counsel, and went with Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth-gilead: and the Syrians smote Joram [[2Chron. 22:5](#)].

This gets confusing, too, because there was a Jehoram in both the northern and the southern kingdoms. It looks as though we have the same man back again, but Jehoram, king of Judah, is dead. His son, Ahaziah, is the king, and now he aligns himself with Jehoram, king of Israel. Jehoram was wounded in this battle with the Syrians.

And he returned to be healed in Jezreel because of the wounds which were given him at Ramah, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria. And Azariah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab at Jezreel, because he was sick [[2Chron. 22:6](#)].

Azariah, king of Judah, went to visit Jehoram, king of Israel, who was recovering at Jezreel, and he probably took him a basket of fruit or something.

And the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram: for when he was come, he went out with Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to cut off the house of Ahab [[2Chron. 22:7](#)].

The interesting thing is that Jehu didn't know that Ahaziah, this king from the southern kingdom, was up there. Notice what happened.

And it came to pass, that, when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah, and the

sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah, he slew them [[2Chron. 22:8](#)].

These "sons of the brethren of Ahaziah" were not the brothers of Ahaziah, since they had been slain by Arabian marauders ([2Chron. 21:17](#)), but these were the sons of these brothers, and therefore Ahaziah's nephews. The "princes of Judah" were probably distant relatives who held important offices in the court. Jehu slew them all. Now he goes after Ahaziah, who had escaped, and he is found and slain.

And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, (for he was hid in Samaria,) and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him: Because, said they, he is the son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart. So the house of Ahaziah had no power to keep still the kingdom [[2Chron. 22:9](#)].

This is a bloody period. God records it to let us know that He judges sin. He wants us to know that man doesn't get by with sin. How complicated it is! I said before that the way of sin is crooked and complicated.

Athaliah's Brutal Reign (22:10-12)

But when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal of the house of Judah [[2Chron. 22:10](#)].

I'll be very frank with you. It takes a bloody person and a mean one to kill her own grandchildren! If you are a grandparent, you share my feeling about grandchildren. I know why they call them grandchildren -- they are grand. The fact of the matter is, I think grandchildren are more wonderful than children. If I had known how wonderful they were, I'd have had my grandchildren before I had my children!

I do not understand how this bloody queen could slay her grandchildren, but that is what she did. She slew all but one -- because she couldn't find him.

But Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons that were slain, and put him and his nurse in a bedchamber. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (for she was the sister of Ahaziah,) hid him from Athaliah, so that she slew him not.

And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land [[2Chron. 22:11-12](#)].

If this had not taken place, the line of David would have been cut off. And God's promise to David concerning the coming of the Messiah would never have taken place. This is how close it was.

You can see that Satan has made attempts again and again to try to destroy the line that would lead to Christ. You will recall how Satan tried to destroy the line that would lead to Christ when all the male babies were to be slain down in the land of Egypt. He tried to have all the Jews exterminated at the time of Haman. After Jesus was born, he worked through old Herod and tried to kill Jesus by killing all the baby boys around Bethlehem.

Here is another instance when Satan had the line of David reduced so there was only one survivor.

This little fellow, Joash, was one year old when he was hidden. He was kept hidden away in the temple for six years. During that time the bloody queen ruled the land.

CHAPTERS 23 AND 24

Chapter 23

THEME: Revival during Joash's reign

During the reign of Joash, the third period of revival came to the southern kingdom of Judah. Of course it was not much of a revival, and most of the credit for a return to God belongs to the priest Jehoiada.

Joash Is Made King (23:1-11)

And in the seventh year Jehoiada strengthened himself, and took the captains of hundreds, Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri, into covenant with him [[2Chron. 23:1](#)].

The leadership of Judah was dissatisfied with the bloody queen Athaliah. So now Jehoiada, the priest, calls them to a meeting, a very private meeting, to let them know that there is a son of David who is still alive. They all pledge themselves to make this little fellow of the line of David their king.

They gathered Levites and the chiefs of Israel and laid careful plans to crown little Joash who was in the line of David. A third part of the group would act as porters at the doors of the temple on the sabbath. A third part would be at the king's house. A third part would be at the gate of the foundation. They would not permit anyone inside the temple except the priests and the Levites. The Levites around the little king would all be armed with weapons. Jehoiada gave out spears and bucklers and shields which were kept in the temple. All of these arrangements were carried out.

Then they brought out the king's son, and put upon him the crown, and gave him the testimony, and made him king. And Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, God save the king [[2Chron. 23:11](#)].

This was an exciting and thrilling coup, and little seven-year-old Joash, who is in the line of David, is now on the throne of Judah.

Execution Of Athaliah (23:12-15)

Athaliah thought that she had killed off all her offspring. Why had she done such a brutal act? She had a thirst for power. She wanted to be queen.

There are certain men and certain women in this world who will do anything for power. Every group or class of people has them. There are preachers who will do that, deacons will do it, politicians and dictators will do that. There are many members of the human

family who will stoop to almost anything in order to have power. They are, like this queen, craving for power.

Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people into the house of the LORD [[2Chron. 23:12](#)].

I tell you, this woman Athaliah was taken by surprise.

And she looked, and, behold, the king stood at his pillar at the entering in, and the princes and the trumpets by the king: and all the people of the land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, also the singers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing praise. Then Athaliah rent her clothes, and said, Treason, Treason [[2Chron. 23:13](#)].

From her standpoint it was high treason!

Then Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds that were set over the host, and said unto them, Have her forth of the ranges: and whoso followeth her, let him be slain with the sword. For the priest said, Slay her not in the house of the LORD.

So they laid hands on her; and when she was come to the entering of the horse gate by the king's house, they slew her there [[2Chron. 23:14-15](#)].

Revival Through Jehoiada (23:16-21)

Joash is still a little fellow, only seven years old; so Jehoiada is his regent. Jehoiada is actually the one who will make the decisions until this boy comes of age. Jehoiada is God's priest, and he leads the nation back to the worship of God.

And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD'S people [[2Chron. 23:16](#)].

Jehoiada broke down the altars of Baal and killed the priests of Baal. He revived worship of Jehovah by setting up the order of priests and Levites for the burnt offerings. Singing was restored as it had been ordained by David. Porters watched the gates so nothing unclean entered the temple.

And all the people of the land rejoiced: and the city was quiet, after that they had slain Athaliah with the sword [[2Chron. 23:21](#)].

There is repetition over and over of the same theme. Sin always brings complications, trouble, heartbreak, and the judgment of God. Revival restores peace and quiet to the land.

Chapter 24

Reign Of Joash (24:1-16)

Joash was seven years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Zibiah of Beer-sheba [[2Chron. 24:1](#)].

Jehoiada, the priest, is the one who really guided and led this little fellow during the early part of his reign. However, his mother's name is given to us, and she must have been a good mother. She apparently agreed with the return to the Lord which was taking place. Her home was in Beer-sheba. When I was down there not long ago, I thought of the mother of Joash. Beer-sheba is also the town of Abraham.

And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

And Jehoiada took for him two wives; and he begat sons and daughters [[2Chron. 24:2-3](#)].

Joash did what was right under the coaching of Jehoiada; then we have the strange statement that he took two wives for him. Of course this didn't happen when he was seven years old -- remember that he reigned forty years. Is the implication that it was all right to have two wives? No. It was wrong. It is not recorded because God approved of it; it is recorded because that is what he did. Considering the background of that day, two wives was really a small number. This was extremely mild, especially for a king in that period.

And it came to pass after this, that Joash was minded to repair the house of the LORD [[2Chron. 24:4](#)].

As Joash grew up, Jehoiada grew old -- he was one hundred thirty years old when he died. Apparently he lost his control over the other priests, and the temple was not restored. Although it is questionable to say that Joash led in the revival -- there wasn't much of a revival under him -- it was revival. And he was the one who planned and insisted on repairing the temple of God.

And he gathered together the priests and the Levites, and said to them, Go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not.

And the king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection, according to the commandment of Moses the servant of the LORD, and of the congregation of Israel, for the tabernacle of witness? [[2Chron. 24:5-6](#)].

Apparently Jehoiada has grown old, and the priests are indifferent. They have fallen down on their job.

For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God: and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim [[2Chron. 24:7](#)].

This tells us what had actually happened to the temple and who was responsible. God's temple was in a terribly disreputable condition. So Joash takes the matter in his own hands.

And at the king's commandment they made a chest, and set it without at the gate of the house of the LORD.

And they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem, to bring in to the LORD the collection that Moses the servant of God laid upon Israel in the wilderness.

And all the princes and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end [[2Chron. 24:8-10](#)].

"Until they had made an end" means that they got all they needed.

Now it came to pass, that at what time the chest was brought unto the king's office by the hand of the Levites, and when they saw that there was much money, the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it, and carried it to his place again. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance [[2Chron. 24:11](#)].

Joash couldn't trust the Levites going out and collecting the money, so he puts this chest there in the temple, and people put their contributions there.

By the way, many organizations since then have used this method. They put out what they call a "chest of Joash" and ask folk to put their offerings in it.

And the king and Jehoiada gave it to such as did the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and hired masons and carpenters to repair the house of the LORD, and also such as wrought iron and brass to mend the house of the LORD.

So the workmen wrought and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it [[2Chron. 24:12-13](#)].

As a result, the repair work of the temple was completed.

And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, even vessels to minister, and to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada [[2Chron. 24:14](#)].

There were sufficient funds to remake the vessels and implements to carry on the regular services in the temple.

But Jehoiada waxed old, and was full of days when he died; an hundred and thirty years old was he when he died [[2Chron. 24:15](#)].

This gives the explanation of why the priests were negligent in carrying out the order of the king. Jehoiada was probably senile. He had experienced bringing up this boy, and I suppose he had liberties that no one else would have had with the king.

And they buried him in the city of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God, and toward his house [[2Chron. 24:16](#)].

Jehoiada actually received royal honors in his death.

Apostasy After Jehoiada (24:17-22)

Now after the death of Jehoiada, a new era begins.

Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them.

And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass [[2Chron. 24:17-18](#)].

You see, as long as Jehoiada lived, the princes did not dare go into idolatry. Jehoiada maintained a very strong influence. Joash is a young king and probably very lenient. These princes pledge allegiance to him, but they go out and worship idols again.

Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear [[2Chron. 24:19](#)].

In His mercy, God sends prophets to warn them, but they will not listen. So God sends a message by a man who is the son of Jehoiada.

And the spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you [[2Chron. 24:20](#)].

Now notice the shocking thing that happens.

And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD [[2Chron. 24:21](#)].

My thought is that Joash has been given wrong information about this man. He was the son of Jehoiada! You would think that Joash would never have done a thing like this, but it reveals the evil influence of the princes and the despicable deeds that they were engaged in. They put him to death.

Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it [[2Chron. 24:22](#)].

In other words, this dying man calls upon God to take vengeance upon the king for this.

Judgment Upon Joash (24:23-27)

And it came to pass at the end of the year, that the host of Syria came up against him: and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people from among the people, and sent all the spoil of them unto the king of Damascus.

For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash [[2Chron. 24:23-24](#)].

God judges them by defeat in battle. Although Joash had been a good king, he had ordered this heartless murder. God must judge him because he is the king and because of his influence upon the whole nation.

And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,) his own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died: and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings [[2Chron. 24:25](#)].

Jehoiada the priest had been buried with honor; now Joash the king is buried with dishonor.

Now concerning his sons, and the greatness of the burdens laid upon him, and the repairing of the house of God, behold, they are written in the story of the book of the kings. And Amaziah his son reigned in his stead [[2Chron. 24:27](#)].

So we see that Joash at the beginning led a revival under the influence of Jehoiada; but, after Jehoiada's death, he apparently lapsed into a state of apostasy.

CHAPTERS 25--28

Chapter 25

THEME: The reigns of Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, and Ahaz

Amaziah's Reign (25:1-28)

Amaziah was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, but not with a perfect heart [[2Chron. 25:1-2](#)].

I guess you could say he was a moderately good king.

Now it came to pass, when the kingdom was established to him, that he slew his servants that had killed the king his father [[2Chron. 25:3](#)].

He executed the men who had murdered his father.

But he slew not their children, but did as it is written in the law in the book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin [[2Chron. 25:4](#)].

He obeyed the Mosaic Law in this respect.

This is an important principle. You will never be judged because of the sins of your mother or the sins of your father. You stand judged on the basis of your own sins. On the other hand you may have a very goodly mother or father, but you will never go to heaven because of godly parents. You will go to heaven because of the faith that you must exercise in Christ. This is a tremendous principle that is put down here.

Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together, and made them captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of their fathers, throughout all Judah and Benjamin: and he numbered them from twenty years old and above, and found them three hundred thousand choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield [[2Chron. 25:5](#)].

He is getting ready for war. Also he hires an enemy -- mercenary soldiers from Israel.

But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee; for the LORD is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim.

But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down [[2Chron. 25:7-8](#)].

He warns Amaziah to trust God. After all, he has the example of Jehoshaphat and Asa in the past. He should know that God would not want him to hire men of Israel.

And Amaziah said to the man of God, But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel? And the man of God answered, The LORD is able to give thee much more than this.

Then Amaziah separated them, to wit, the army that was come to him out of Ephraim, to go home again: wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

And Amaziah strengthened himself, and led forth his people, and went to the valley of salt, and smote of the children of Seir ten thousand [[2Chron. 25:9-11](#)].

Amaziah obeyed what the man of God had told him. He separated the army of Israel from his own army and sent them back to Israel. Then God gave him a victory over the children of Seir. The battle was fought down by the Dead Sea.

Now it came to pass, after that Amaziah was come from the slaughter of the Edomites, that he brought the gods of the children

of Seir, and set them up to be his gods, and bowed down himself before them, and burned incense unto them [[2Chron. 25:14](#)].

It is amazing that this man would do a thing like this, but it reveals the iniquity that is in the human heart.

Wherefore the anger of the LORD was kindled against Amaziah, and he sent unto him a prophet, which said unto him, Why hast thou sought after the gods of the people, which could not deliver their own people out of thine hand?

And it came to pass, as he talked with him, that the king said unto him, Art thou made of the king's counsel? forbear; why shouldest thou be smitten? Then the prophet forbore, and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel [[2Chron. 25:15-16](#)].

Now civil war breaks out again.

Then Amaziah king of Judah took advice, and sent to Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come let us see one another in the face [[2Chron. 25:17](#)].

Amaziah said, "Let's see each other eyeball to eyeball." He was challenging Israel to go to war. Joash replies to Amaziah with a little parable.

And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle.

Thou sayest, Lo, thou hast smitten the Edomites; and thine heart lifteth thee up to boast: abide now at home; why shouldest thou meddle to thine hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou and Judah with thee? [[2Chron. 25:18-19](#)].

In other words, the parable was an insulting way of saying, "If you stay home and mind your own business, you won't get hurt."

But Amaziah would not hear; for it came of God, that he might deliver them into the hand of their enemies, because they sought after the gods of Edom [[2Chron. 25:20](#)].

Amaziah would not listen. Now God judges him.

And Joash the king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, at Beth-shemesh, and brought him to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem for the gate of Ephraim to the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

And he took all the gold and the silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of God with Obed-edom, and the treasures of the king's house, the hostages also, and returned to Samaria [[2Chron. 25:23-24](#)].

Of course it was an easy victory for Israel. It was a fulfillment of the prophet's warning, "I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsel."

Now after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the LORD they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem; and he fled to Lachish: but they sent to Lachish after him, and slew him there.

And they brought him upon horses, and buried him with his fathers in the city of Judah [[2Chron. 25:27-28](#)].

Chapter 26

Uzziah's Reign (26:1-5)

Now the son of Amaziah, Uzziah, came to the throne when he was only a teenager.

Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in the room of his father Amaziah.

He built Eloth, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

Sixteen years old was Uzziah when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jecoliah of Jerusalem [[2Chron. 26:1-3](#)].

Uzziah was a good king but not an outstanding one. There was no revival during his reign. It was during this period, by the way, that Isaiah began his ministry. He was commissioned at the death of Uzziah, as Isaiah tells us in [Isaiah 6:1](#). As we have seen, the northern kingdom did not have a good king, not one. In the southern kingdom there were a few good kings. Five of them could be considered exceptional because during their reign there was revival and reformation. Uzziah's reign did not produce revival, but he was a good king. The denominational seminary from which I graduated was quite liberal, but it did have a Bible course, although it was very fragmentary. One of the questions that had been asked from time immemorial was to name the kings of Israel and Judah and briefly describe the reign of each. Some ingenious freshman of days gone by had discovered that if you would write after each one of them, "A bad king," you couldn't make less than ninety five percent -- and what freshman wants to make more than that? So what we all did was memorize the kings and write after each one of them, "A bad king." Now when we wrote, "Bad king" after Uzziah's name, we were wrong; Uzziah was not exceptional, but he was a good king.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah did.

And he sought God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of God: and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him to prosper [[2Chron. 26:4-5](#)].

Uzziah's Successes (26:6-15)

And he went forth and warred against the Philistines, and brake down the wall of Gath, and the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built cities about Ashdod, and among the Philistines [[2Chron. 26:6](#)].

Gath was one of the strongholds of the Philistines.

I visited Ashdod some time ago. It is experiencing a tremendous business boom today because they have made a harbor there. In the old days the ancient ships could come to Caesarea but not to Ashdod. Now there is a wonderful man-made harbor there, and I suppose it receives more of the goods that are being shipped in and out of Israel than any other port. It is the place where the oil pipe lines come from the Red Sea. The oil is piped, put into the tankers, and carried from there. There is building going on everywhere. Now this entire area is what Uzziah took. All of this was Philistine country. But that wasn't all:

And the Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah: and his name spread abroad even to the entering in of Egypt; for he strengthened himself exceedingly.

Moreover Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at the turning of the wall, and fortified them.

Also he built towers in the desert, and digged many wells: for he had much cattle, both in the low country, and in the plains: husbandmen also, and vine dressers in the mountains, and in Carmel: for he loved husbandry [[2Chron. 26:8-10](#)].

We are told that he "loved husbandry" -- he was a farmer at heart, a farmer and a rancher. Down in that area from Ashdod and Ashkelon and Gath, all the way down to Beer-sheba, is great pasture land. It is today a great place for raising cattle and sheep, which is what Uzziah did. Then on up toward Carmel is the valley of Esdraelon, and that is great fruit country, especially vineyards. We are told that King Uzziah loved that sort of thing.

Moreover Uzziah had an host of fighting men, that went out to war by bands, according to the number of their account by the hand of Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the ruler, under the hand of Hananiah, one of the king's captains.

The whole number of the chief of the fathers of the mighty men of valour were two thousand and six hundred.

And under their hand was an army, three hundred thousand and seven thousand and five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy [[2Chron. 26:11-13](#)].

The southern kingdom of Judah was strong militarily at this time.

And Uzziah prepared for them throughout all the host shields, and spears, and helmets and habergeons, and bows, and slings to cast stones.

And he made in Jerusalem engines, invented by cunning men, to be on the towers and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great

stones withal. And his name spread far abroad; for he was marvellously helped, till he was strong [[2Chron. 26:14-15](#)].

In ancient warfare they had certain kinds of machines that would hurl rocks. Also they could fix bows that would shoot arrows without being pulled by human power. And they were able to build bows of tremendous size that would shoot arrows a great distance. It is interesting to note that this man Uzziah was responsible for this new method of warfare.

Now Uzziah -- as we have seen with all the kings, even the good ones -- has a chink in his armor. Each has a weakness; each has his Achilles' heel. That is man even today. Regardless of what man he is, there is a weak spot in him.

Uzziah's Weakness (26:16-23)

Sometimes success is the worst thing that can happen to any of us, because we become lifted up with pride. Pride was Uzziah's downfall.

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense [[2Chron. 26:16](#)].

He went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense. Wasn't that all right? No, it was all wrong for him. Why?

And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men:

And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God [[2Chron. 26:17-18](#)].

The priests could actually resist the king in this matter. The king was usurping the priest's office; he was doing what was strictly forbidden for anyone to do except the sons of Aaron. Only the priests of the line of Aaron could enter into the holy place -- the golden lampstand and the altar of incense were there.

Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar [[2Chron. 26:19](#)].

This was instant judgment from God upon Uzziah.

And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the

house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land [[2Chron. 26:20-21](#)].

The son of Uzziah had to take over the affairs of state, because Uzziah was in quarantine for the rest of his life.

Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, did Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, write [[2Chron. 26:22](#)].

In the prophecy of Isaiah, we read that Isaiah began his ministry at the death of Uzziah ([Isa. 6:1](#)).

So Uzziah slept with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead [[2Chron. 26:23](#)].

Uzziah's funeral could almost be called a happy funeral. Death for a Christian should not be a dread. Paul could say to the Thessalonian believers, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" ([1Thess. 4:13](#)). Also to the Corinthian Christians he said, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" ([1Cor. 15:55](#)). Funerals are not always as sad as they seem. The funeral of Uzziah was not sad. Why not? He was a leper. Uzziah had been a good king, but God records his sin also. He had intruded into the priest's office. That was the spot on the apple. His sin was the sin of presumption. There are still people today who sin by presumption. They attempt to approach God by man's way and not by God's way. God has told us that we must come to him in His way. The Lord Jesus Christ said, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)). Uzziah had tried to come to God in his own way, and he had become a leper. This was a terrible disease. It was an awful disease physically, it was an awful disease psychologically, and it was an awful disease in every way. It entailed a great deal of suffering. Death for Uzziah was a sweet release. Uzziah was God's man in spite of his sin, and God judged him for his sin. Remember that Paul wrote to the believers, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" ([1Cor. 11:31](#)). Uzziah was judged of God down here, but he went to Paradise as God's man.

There are multitudes of believers who are helpless and hopeless in a frail and feeble body. One of these days there will be a sweet release for them. What a wonderful and joyful thing it is to go into the presence of Christ! There is nothing to sorrow about in a case like that. I imagine Jotham was dry-eyed at the funeral of his father. I'm sure he loved his father, and he understood that his father was a saved man.

Chapter 27

Jotham's Reign (27:1-9)

Jotham is another king whom we would classify as a good king. Judah has had three good kings in a row -- that was unusual.

Jotham was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the LORD. And the people did yet corruptly [[2Chron. 27:1-2](#)].

Something very strange and interesting is said about this man: "he entered not into the temple of the LORD." There is a background for this. When his father went into the temple, he was made a leper. But, of course, he went the wrong way -- he intruded into the holy place. This boy Jotham did what was right in the sight of the Lord, but he stayed away from the temple. You can't help but feel sympathetic toward him, but he set a very bad example for the nation. As a result "the people did yet corruptly." They did not turn to God. Here is a man with a tremendous opportunity to lead his people back to God, but he had this hang-up -- perhaps a root of bitterness. His father was made a leper in the temple, and he didn't want to go into that temple.

There are a great many people today who do just that sort of thing. They are kept away from God's house by prejudice. I have seen a number of folk who had dropped out of God's service because of prejudice, or an unfortunate incident which had happened years before or had involved a loved one. When I was a young man, I got acquainted with the son of a great Baptist preacher from Texas. He was really living it up in Pasadena when I met him. We used to play handball and volleyball together back in those days. When I tried to talk with him, he said, "Now listen, don't talk to me about religion. I know as much about it as you do." Then he told me how a group of deacons of the church had mistreated his father. He said, "I will never again darken the door of a church." I think he was wrong and I told him that. But very candidly, there was a background for it. That is the way it was with Jotham. There was an understandable background for his action.

He built the high gate of the house of the LORD, and on the wall of Ophel he built much.

Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers [[2Chron. 27:3-4](#)].

In that day the land was wooded. Today the hills are bare, for the most part. However trees are being planted now so that more of the land is becoming wooded again. Back in those days it was a land flowing with milk and honey. Jotham built castles among the hills. He was a great builder. I guess he is the man who started building subdivisions.

He fought also with the king of the Ammonites, and prevailed against them. And the children of Ammon gave him the same year an hundred talents of silver, and ten thousand measures of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. So much did the children of Ammon pay unto him, both the second year, and the third.

So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God [[2Chron. 27:5-6](#)].

He kept his nation strong militarily as his father had done.

He was five and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem.

And Jotham slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead [[2Chron. 27:8-9](#)].

Only one brief chapter is devoted to the reign of Jotham. Here is a young man who could have been a great king, but a prejudice prevented him from being a great king and doing great things for God.

Chapter 28

Ahaz' Reign (28:1-4)

We knew that sooner or later Judah would get a bad king, and here he is. At this time the northern king of Israel was on the verge of going into captivity, and the southern kingdom of Judah was brought very low by the sins of Ahaz, as we shall see.

Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father:

For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made also molten images for Baalim [[2Chron. 28:1-2](#)].

Ahaz was a bad king. He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and that meant evil ways. David was the human standard by which these kings were measured, and this man fell far short of that human standard. As a result we now begin to see the sad future of the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom will go into captivity to the Assyrians. God will give many warnings to the southern kingdom, but they, likewise, will follow into captivity -- not to Assyria, but later on to Babylon.

Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel [[2Chron. 28:3](#)].

This means he offered his children on a red-hot altar. Actually, it was an idol that was heated red-hot for human sacrifices.

He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree [[2Chron. 28:4](#)].

Ahaz went completely into idolatry and plunged the southern kingdom into idolatry.

Invasion By Syria And Israel (28:5-15)

Wherefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captives, and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter [[2Chron. 28:5](#)].

As it were, God opens up the doors of His nation, His people, and permits the enemy to come in. Syria comes down, and for the first time the wall is breached into the southern kingdom. There are many who are taken captive. The sad part is that the northern kingdom had joined with Syria in making this attack, and so we find that many who were

taken captive actually became captives of Israel, the northern kingdom. Israel took men of Judah into captivity.

For Pekah the son of Remaliah slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day, which were all valiant men; because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers [[2Chron. 28:6](#)].

God makes the reason crystal-clear.

And Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, slew Maaseiah the king's son, and Azrikam the governor of the house, and Elkanah that was next to the king.

And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons, and daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria [[2Chron. 28:7-8](#)].

This is the very sad plight of the southern kingdom. God permitted this to happen because Ahaz and the people had plunged into idolatry with abandon.

Now God sends a prophet to Israel to speak to them because of their extreme cruelty to their brethren.

But a prophet of the LORD was there, whose name was Oded: and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, Behold, because the LORD God of your fathers was wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven.

And now ye purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? [[2Chron. 28:9-10](#)].

God had expressly forbidden taking their brethren into slavery ([Lev. 25:39-40](#)).

Now hear me therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the LORD is upon you.

Then certain of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, and Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against them that came from the war [[2Chron. 28:11-12](#)].

A group of leaders in the northern kingdom took their stand against enslaving their brethren from the southern kingdom.

And said unto them, Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the LORD already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass: for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel.

So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and all the congregation.

And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren: then they returned to Samaria [[2Chron. 28:13-15](#)].

They were able to secure their release and return them to their homes.

The southern kingdom of Judah was in a really sad plight at this time. If it had not been for the fact that God intervened, they would have been almost eliminated as a nation. It did weaken them a great deal and laid them open to further invasion.

Invasion By Edom And Philistia (28:16-27)

At that time did king Ahaz send unto the kings of Assyria to help him.

For again the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives.

The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh, and Ajalon, and Gederoth, and Shocho with the villages thereof, and Timnah with the villages thereof, Gimzo also and the villages thereof: and they dwelt there [[2Chron. 28:16-18](#)].

When God removed His protection, it was like opening the flood gates and letting the enemy come in. This was, of course, the result of the nation's sin. Wars are the direct result of sin. In the New Testament James asks the question, "From whence come wars and fightings among you?" The answer is, "come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have . . ." ([James 4:1-2](#)). As long as there is sin in the heart of man, he cannot have peace. He can't have any kind of peace -- peace with God, peace in his own heart, or peace with his fellowman. There must be a settling of the sin question in order to have peace. The experience of Judah illustrates this. Because of sin on the part of the people they will have not peace.

Ahaz made another big mistake. Instead of turning to God, he turned to Assyria for help.

And Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.

For Ahaz took away a portion out of the house of the LORD, and out of the house of the king, and of the princes, and gave it unto the king of Assyria: but he helped him not [[2Chron. 28:20-21](#)].

Ahaz put his trust in the king of Assyria. He sent him a generous gift from the wealth of the temple and of the palace. The king of Assyria accepted it, but he never did send any help to Ahaz. He didn't need to. He was a powerful king, and poor Ahaz was a very weak king. Ahaz had turned from God and trusted in Assyria, and Assyria let him down. Assyria did not make good on their treaty. You cannot expect nations to be true to their

treaties. Why not? Very simply, as long as men are sinners, men will be liars, which means you cannot trust them. The Bible tells us we are not to put our trust in man. We are to put our trust in God.

And in the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD: this is that king Ahaz.

For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him, and of all Israel [[2Chron. 28:22-23](#)].

Ahaz then cut up the vessels of the house of God, he shut up the doors of the temple, and he made heathen altars in every corner of Jerusalem.

And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem: but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead [[2Chron. 28:27](#)].

So ends this very sad and sordid and sorry reign of Ahaz.

CHAPTERS 29--32

Chapter 29

THEME: Revival during Hezekiah's reign

We come now to the reign of Hezekiah and one of the periods of revival in the nation of Judah. You would think that after the reign of Ahaz there would be no hope for the nation. They were depleted of their resources, they had been defeated in war, they had been betrayed by Assyria, and you would think there would be no help for them from any quarter. However, Hezekiah came to the kingdom for such a time as this, because he is God's man.

Hezekiah began to reign when he was five and twenty years old, and he reigned nine and twenty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah [[2Chron. 29:1](#)].

Both the mother and the grandfather are mentioned here, but there is no mention of his father, old Ahaz. Apparently Hezekiah had a godly mother and a godly grandfather, and they influenced this young man.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done [[2Chron. 29:2](#)].

The Book of 2 Kings has a more succinct account of the revival under Hezekiah. "He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan. He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor any that were

before him. For he clave to the LORD, and departed not from following him, but kept his commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD was with him; and he prospered whithersoever he went forth . . ." ([2Kings 18:4-7](#)).

When you come down all the list of the twenty-one kings of Judah who followed David, there is none greater than Hezekiah. He is the outstanding one, a man who turned to God. I believe he led in one of the greatest revivals, and there were some great ones.

I mentioned that his revival is recorded in 2 Kings. Here in 2 Chronicles, which is written from God's point of view, four lengthy chapters are devoted to Hezekiah. Evidently God took great delight in Hezekiah. Also Isaiah the prophet has in the center of his book several chapters which are historical and not prophetic. They have to do with -- yes, you guessed it -- Hezekiah. Three times in the Word of God we are told about this man and the great return to God which he led.

In Chronicles we are told the positive things which he did to restore worship. In Kings we are told the negative things he had to do. He had to remove the high places and break the images and had to break in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made because the people were burning incense to it. He had to get rid of that stumbling block. He contemptuously called it "Nehushtan" -- it was just a piece of brass. There had been one time when the people had looked at the serpent in faith, trusting the promise of God, then the brazen serpent had been the basis of physical salvation for those who were bitten by the poisonous snakes. Now it had become an object of worship. It had become an idol. It was a stumbling block to the people.

There are those today who worship the symbol of the cross. They feel that there is some merit in having a cross in their possession. My friend, there would be no merit in it at all. You can make an idol of anything -- you can worship the spigot because it gives you water, you could worship the window because it brings you light, or you could worship the automobile because it transports you. A great many people today worship the television screen; they sit before it for hours each day. May I say to you, there is no merit in objects. The merit is in God, of course; this is written from God's viewpoint.

Now in Chronicles we are given the positive side of Hezekiah's reforms.

He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them [[2Chron. 29:3](#)].

Remember that Ahaz had nailed shut the doors of the temple. Nobody was using it. As soon as Hezekiah began to reign, he opened the doors of the temple. They were open for the first time in a long time. Now Hezekiah tells them to clean everything.

And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street.

And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place [[2Chron. 29:4-5](#)].

Hezekiah says, "Sanctify now yourselves." There had to be a return to holy living, to honesty, and to integrity. There had to be a setting-apart for God. That was something that was needed. I think we need the same thing today. We have too much of this homogenized Christianity today -- mixing good and bad together.

For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs.

Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel [[2Chron. 29:6-7](#)].

He places the blame where it belongs. They have brought disaster upon themselves because of their sins.

Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes.

For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this [[2Chron. 29:8-9](#)].

Now he tells them what is upon his heart.

Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us [[2Chron. 29:10](#)].

Temple Worship Restored (29:20-36)

Then Hezekiah the king rose early, and gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD.

And they brought seven bullocks, and seven rams, and seven lambs, and seven he goats, for a sin offering for the kingdom, and for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And he commanded the priests the sons of Aaron to offer them on the altar of the LORD [[2Chron. 29:20-21](#)].

Hezekiah set a good example. He took a public stand for God. I believe this is one of the things that is needed today. God's people need to take a public stand for God. We need to stand for God in our place of work and in our social gatherings.

The priests made an atonement for all Israel with the burnt offerings and sin offering. Music was again brought into the worship in the temple. There was singing and instrumental music as David had organized it. The whole congregation sang praises to God and worshiped Him.

And Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly [[2Chron. 29:36](#)].

Chapter 30

Feast Of Passover Restored (30:1-27)

And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the passover unto the LORD God of Israel [[2Chron. 30:1](#)].

Here is another wonderful thing this man did. Remember that his father had carried on warfare against the northern kingdom, and many of those from Judah had been taken captive. You might think that Hezekiah would have come to the throne with a spirit of vengeance in his heart and with a spirit of getting even. But notice that after he had opened up the temple of God, restoring the worship of God and giving his own public testimony, he sends an invitation to the northern kingdom to come and worship God. What a wonderful, marvelous spirit this is!

For the king had taken counsel, and his princes, and all the congregation in Jerusalem, to keep the passover in the second month [[2Chron. 30:2](#)].

Authority for observing the Passover in the second month, instead of the first, is given in [Numbers 9:10-11](#).

Although the invitation, which Hezekiah sent into the northern kingdom, was rejected and ridiculed by some, many responded and came to keep the Passover with their brethren.

Then they killed the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month: and the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and sanctified themselves, and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the LORD.

And they stood in their place after their manner, according to the law of Moses the man of God: the priests sprinkled the blood, which they received of the hand of the Levites.

For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the killing of the passovers for every one that was not clean, to sanctify them unto the LORD [[2Chron. 30:15-17](#)].

The people had come from all over Israel, and some of them were not sanctified.

For the multitude of the people, even many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, The good LORD pardon every one

That prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people [[2Chron. 30:18-20](#)].

This, I think, is one of the loveliest things Hezekiah did. When he sent invitations to the people of Israel in the north, many came down out of the different tribes to Jerusalem to worship. But, you see, these people have been without the Word of God all their lives. They had been living in the northern kingdom, in the place of idolatry, and yet they had a hunger and a desire to serve God and to obey Him. When they came down for the feast, they were supposed to have been cleansed, to have prepared their hearts for the Passover, and they hadn't done that. They went ahead and ate the Passover without knowing that they should have been cleansed. When it was told to Hezekiah, he prayed for them: "The good Lord pardon every one." Isn't that a lovely thing which he did for them? It was ignorance on their part. Their hearts had been seeking the Lord, but they didn't understand that they had to be purified. The Lord listened to the prayer of Hezekiah and healed the people. This reveals that the form and the ceremony are not the important things. God is interested in the condition of the hearts of the people. What a wonderful, glorious lesson this is here.

And the children of Israel that were present at Jerusalem kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with great gladness: and the Levites and the priests praised the Lord day by day, singing with loud instruments unto the LORD [[2Chron. 30:21](#)].

They were having such a wonderful time, that they decided to extend the feast for another week.

And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days: and they kept other seven days with gladness [[2Chron. 30:23](#)].

This was a joyous return to the Lord and to His Word.

So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem.

Then the priests the Levites arose and blessed the people: and their voice was heard, and their prayer came up to his holy dwelling place, even unto heaven [[2Chron. 30:26-27](#)].

Now I want you to notice this man Hezekiah. His father, old Ahaz, had made idolatry the state religion in Judah. Now Hezekiah begins to rid the land of idols.

Chapter 31

Feast Of Passover Restored (continued) (31:1-21)

Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities [[2Chron. 31:1](#)].

After this, there was a great period of reformation that took place. Hezekiah was the man who led in all of this.

And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah, and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the LORD his God.

And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered [[2Chron. 31:20-21](#)].

Now let's look a little more closely at the life of Hezekiah. What kind of man was he?

First of all, he was a man of faith. When I say faith, I mean more than what is generally thought of as faith.

A member of a certain "ism" told me that there were four things one had to do to be saved. So I asked him, "What do you think you have to do to be saved?" I won't mention all four things, but one of them was faith. I told him, "I don't agree with you on any of the four." He was a little shocked. He said, "Well, certainly you believe in faith, because I know you preach on that." I said, "But I don't mean faith in the same way that you mean faith. You are saying that if one believes hard enough he will be saved."

The modern conception of faith reminds me of the county fairs I used to go to when I was a boy. At each fair there was a gadget to test a man's strength. There was weight on a pair of scales that looked like a giant thermometer. A man would come along and hit the thing with a sledge hammer, which would knock the weight up. A fellow would come along with his girl friend, and they would challenge him to try out his strength. He would take off his coat, spit on his hands, and swing that hammer with all his might to see if he could ring the bell up at the top. He would make the supreme effort. He would really try hard.

That's the way some folk think faith is. They say, "If I could only believe hard enough." My friend, faith is not a psychological response to anything. Faith is not in the feelings; it is an accomplished fact. Faith is that which is wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit. It is a conviction that is born in the spirit of man.

After Peter made his great confession of faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord Jesus said, ". . . Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" ([Matt. 16:17](#)). Faith is not self-meritorious. "For by grace are ye saved through faith . . ." ([Eph. 2:8](#)). Faith is only the instrument. Christ is the Savior and He is the object of faith.

Spurgeon said, "It is not thy hold on Christ that saves thee. It is Christ. It is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee. It is Christ. It is not even thy faith, though that be the instrument; it is Christ's blood and merit." There is no merit in faith. It is not a matter of believing enough. You could believe the wrong thing. There are many people who die as martyrs for fanatic beliefs. They can have ever so much faith, but it is in the wrong thing or the wrong person.

True faith "brings nothing so that it may take all." Faith says, "Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief." Faith trusts God.

Now in the remainder of chapter 31, we see Hezekiah's further reforms. Also there will be reformation in your life when the Lord Jesus saves you, my friend. He is going to change your life.

Remember that when the man sick of the palsy was brought to Christ, Jesus told him his sins were forgiven. The crowd of scribes and Pharisees began to murmur, and call this a case of blasphemy. Jesus said, ". . . What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?" They had no answer for Jesus. Obviously, it is just as easy to do the one as to do the other. It is also just as difficult to do the one as to do the other. Only God can do either one of them. Only God can forgive sin. Only God can make a person get up and walk. "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house" ([Luke 5:22-24](#)).

My friend, if Christ has forgiven your sin, you have taken up your bed and you have walked. You have walked away from your old life. You have walked away from your old sin. You have been changed. If you have not walked away, you are still paralyzed with sin.

Hezekiah is a man of real faith in God, and it changed his life. And now he is changing the kingdom.

Chapter 32

Feast Of Passover Restored (continued) (32:1-22)

Hezekiah is not only a man of faith, he is a man of prayer. In chapter 32 it looks as if the Lord allowed Judah to pass from the sunlight of God's blessing to the darkness of disaster. Sennacherib came down from Assyria again, and he was ready to make an attack upon the city of Jerusalem. He began by terrifying the inhabitants.

[After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came, and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself \[2Chron. 32:1\].](#)

Hezekiah took steps to strengthen and fortify the city, but his confidence was in God. He encouraged his people to trust in Him.

[Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him:](#)

[With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah \[2Chron. 32:7-8\].](#)

After this Sennacherib sent representatives to intimidate the people and break down their morale and shake their confidence in God.

[Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of mine hand, that your God should be able to deliver you out of mine hand?](#)

[Now therefore let not Hezekiah deceive you, nor persuade you on this manner, neither yet believe him: for no god of any nation or](#)

kingdom was able to deliver his people out of mine hand, and out of the hand of my fathers: how much less shall your God deliver you out of mine hand? [[2Chron. 32:14-15](#)].

Also Sennacherib sent letters to demoralize them.

He wrote also letters to rail on the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against him, saying, As the gods of the nations of other lands have not delivered their people out of mine hand, so shall not the God of Hezekiah deliver his people out of mine hand [[2Chron. 32:17](#)].

The record in 2 Kings gives this in more detail. When Hezekiah received the letter, he went up into the house of the Lord, and spread the letter before Him. His wonderful prayer is recorded in [2Kings 19:14-19](#). Hezekiah was a real man of prayer.

And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven [[2Chron. 32:20](#)].

Hezekiah depended upon the Lord for help, and He delivered the city in a miraculous way.

And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all other, and guided them on every side [[2Chron. 32:21-22](#)].

The Illness Of Hezekiah (32:24-31)

In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the LORD: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign [[2Chron. 32:24](#)].

In [2Kings 20](#), the record tells us that Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed and wept before the Lord.

I think I understand how he felt. It rocked me when the doctor told me I had cancer. I could not believe it. When I had to accept the fact, I was not given any assurance at all that I would live. When I was taken to the hospital, I had no idea what the outcome of my illness would be. The nurse had to help me get into bed because I was so weak. I was not physically weak, I was frightened -- I am a coward! She asked, "Are you sick?" "No," I said, "I am scared to death!" She was a Christian nurse, and she smiled at that. I asked her to leave me alone for a while, and I turned my face to the wall, just as Hezekiah had done, and I cried out to God. I told Him that I did not want to die.

When we are sick, I believe we should go to God in prayer and ask others to pray for us. I believe in faith healing (but not in faith healers); I know God can heal. Well, an

acquaintance wrote me a letter in which she said, "I am not going to pray that you get well because I know that you are ready to go and be with the Lord. I am praying that He will take you home." I got an answer back to her in a hurry. I wrote, "Now look here. You let the Lord handle this. Don't try and tell Him how I feel. I don't want to die. I want to live. I want to live as long as I can!"

Now Hezekiah was in that same position. Only God could help him. When he turned his face to the wall, he reminded the Lord that he had walked before Him in truth and with a perfect heart and he had done that which was good in His sight.

They put a poultice of figs on his "boil" -- it could have been cancer. Whatever it was, God healed him and gave him fifteen more years.

But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah [[2Chron. 32:25-26](#)].

The kingdom of Judah had become very poor during the reign of Ahaz, but now it has again become wealthy.

And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver, and for gold, and for precious stones, and for spices, and for shields, and for all manner of pleasant jewels [[2Chron. 32:27](#)].

When the ambassadors from Babylon had come, he very foolishly showed them the entire wealth of his kingdom (see [2Kings 20:12-19](#)). Now, here is God's comment on this episode:

Howbeit in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, who sent unto him to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart [[2Chron. 32:31](#)].

This may seem like an awful thing for me to say, but Hezekiah should have died when the time came for him to die. Three things took place after God extended his life that were foolish acts: he showed his treasures to Babylon, which will cause great trouble in the future; he begat a son, Manasseh, who was the most wicked of any king; he revealed an arrogance, almost an impudence in his later years. His heart became filled with pride. [2Chronicles 32:25](#) tells us, "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem." You see, it might have been better if Hezekiah had died at God's appointed time.

That is why I want to be very careful. The Lord has spared me and I do not want to do anything to disgrace Him. My friend, this is a wonderful chapter, We have a wonderful heavenly Father.

Death Of Hezekiah (32:32-33)

Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, behold, they are written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, and in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.

And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death. And Manasseh his son reigned in his stead [[2Chron. 32:32-33](#)].

Now I would like to talk a few moments on the subject of revival. I think it is very important for us to note that God is sovereign in this matter of revival. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" says our Lord in [John 3:8](#). Only God can send a revival. God is sovereign in this through the working of the Holy Spirit.

God is not a Western Union boy or a bell-boy. You can't just push a button and have Him come at your command. I hear some folks in their prayers command the Lord to do something. We cannot give commands to God, my friend. Remember the experience of Elijah on Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal had screamed themselves hoarse and had yelled like fanatics, but they were not able to bring down fire upon the sacrifice. Then Elijah laid the stones in order and he put wood on there and put the sacrifice on it and poured water over it. Then he prayed to God. He was a man of like passions as we are. In effect he said to the Lord: "All we can do is just get the stones together and put a little order into them. We can put the wood here and the sacrifice on it, but You will need to send the fire." Elijah knew the fire must come from God. God responded at that time.

As I write this, there is a spiritual movement in our land. At first I thought it was confined to young people, but I find it also includes young married couples. Young couples are seeing their children growing away from them. They are coming to realize that they must have answers to some of the problems. One young father said to me, "I thought I could always solve my problems, but I need God." Today there is a turning to the Word of God, and I rejoice in it. I see it everywhere.

Very candidly, I never saw that in my ministry in the church. This movement is largely outside the church. I've seen it in meetings that we have had all over this country. Young people, and older ones too, are coming to the conferences. There seems to be a real interest in the Word of God.

There are pastors and some religious leaders who are trying to capitalize on this; so they feed these young people a bunch of garbage. They give them "hard rock" music in place of Bible study. They give them everything but the Word of God. You remember our Lord asked, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? . . ." ([Luke 11:11](#)). And certainly don't give him "hard rock!" Give him the Word of God.

I find them listening to my Bible teaching program, and I have told them, "I'm old fashioned. I teach the Bible just as it is. Why do you listen to me?" One of them said, "Well, we listen to you because you tell it like it is." That's the only way I know how to tell it, and I've been telling it that way for years, but nobody listened. Now they are

beginning to listen. Are we on the verge of a spiritual awakening? I am praying that the Lord will send it. I want to be very frank with you; if it comes, He will be the One who will send it. I'm just getting my raincoat out in case the showers of blessing come. I have never seen revival in my day, and I would really like to see one. Wouldn't you?

Let me present a challenge to you. Why don't you make an inventory of your own personal life? If you want God to move in on your life, ask yourself these questions:

1. Am I honest?
2. Am I truthful?
3. Am I faithful? Can I be depended upon?
4. Am I pure? Am I really pure in this dirty day of filthy pictures and filthy language?
5. Am I dedicated? Am I really a dedicated child of God? Dwight L. Moody heard a man say that the world has yet to see what God can do with a man who is fully yielded to Him. Moody's response was, "By the grace of God, I will be that man." I think Moody was that man and yet, Moody, on his deathbed said, "The world has yet to see what God can do with a man who is fully yielded to Him." Oh, my friend, let's get into the position where God can move through us to give the Water of Life to a thirsty world.

Chapter 33

THEME: Manasseh's evil reign

As we have seen, Hezekiah had been sick unto death, but he had prayed to God and Isaiah had prayed with him. He had some sort of boil which may well have been a cancer. God healed him and extended his life for fifteen years. That was a gracious dispensation on the part of God in answer to prayer. But when one looks at this in the full light of the history that followed, one wonders if it was the best thing that could have taken place.

First of all, it was during that fifteen-year period after his life had been spared that Hezekiah displayed the wealth of his kingdom to the ambassadors from Babylon. This opened the door for Nebuchadnezzar to come years later and take the city. He knew exactly where the gold was, and he took it by force. That was the Fort Knox of Israel. No one is attacking Fort Knox today. They tell me that the security there is unbelievable, but the gold is leaking out. The nations of the world aren't able to get it by attack; so they are getting it in another way. Well, that gold in Israel tempted Babylon to come and take it. It had been a very foolish thing for Hezekiah to show that gold to them.

Secondly, you will notice here that Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign. This means that this boy was born during the fifteen-year period after God had extended the life of Hezekiah. Manasseh was the most wicked king of all. During his reign there was such godlessness that God had to intervene.

Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem:

But did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel [[2Chron. 33:1-2](#)].

It's a strange thing, isn't it? Hezekiah was the best king and led the nation in a revival. His son comes to the throne and is the worst king. How can you explain that? I'll let you in on a secret: I cannot explain it.

Around me today things are happening like that which I cannot explain. Periodically I hear of a very fine Christian home with wonderful Christian parents in which a son or a daughter rebels against everything. When one looks at young vagrants across the entire land, one can conclude that they were neglected at home. They saw godless, materialistic parents who were fighting all the time, or they came from broken homes, homes that were centered merely on self and selfishness. I can understand why they rebelled against all that and just walked out. But why is it that a son or daughter will simply walk out of a lovely, Christian home and join the rebellious crowd? I really cannot explain it. I can give two possible reasons, and both of them are feeble.

The first reason is that young people are influenced by the other young people around them. All young people go through a period when they feel that their parents are stupid. I can remember after I had gone away to college I was almost ashamed to come home. They just didn't know enough, you see. That is a period that youth go through.

I have heard other young people tell me the same thing. One young pastor told me how ashamed he was of his dad when he went off to college. But after he had been out in the big bad world and had faced some problems, he returned home for a visit. He realized that although his dad had been somewhat stupid, he had managed to make a good living and had provided a marvelous home for his family. He said that the thing which amazed him was how much his dad had learned in those few years he had been away from home! I think all young people go through such a period, and I can understand that young people are influenced by other young folk who have left home in rebellion. That is one explanation.

Also I have noted that young folk who rebel against a Christian home, especially if they have made a profession of faith, will return to the Lord in time. The king we are looking at here, Manasseh, is an illustration of this.

The reign of Manasseh was evil beyond imagination. It is my conviction that the Shekinah glory, which was the visible presence of God, left the temple. The prophet Ezekiel saw the vision of the Shekinah glory lifted up and removed from the Holy of Holies because of the sins of the people and their rebellion. It moved out to the walls of Jerusalem and waited there. The people did not turn back to God. Then the Shekinah glory withdrew to the Mount of Olives and lingered there. Still there was no movement of the people back to God. So the Shekinah glory was caught back up into heaven. Ichabod, which means "the glory has departed," was written over the threshold of the temple. Their house was indeed left unto them desolate.

I know that most expositors feel that the Shekinah glory left the temple during the captivity. I don't feel that is accurate. If the Shekinah glory did not leave during the reign

of Manasseh, I cannot see any other period in Israel's history that would cause the glory, the presence of God, to leave. I believe this was the time.

Notice how long this man reigned. He reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. This man reigned much longer than others, longer than David, longer than Solomon, longer than his father. Why? Because God is merciful. God is longsuffering. He is not willing that any should perish. After all, God has plenty of time on His hands. He has eternity in back of Him and eternity in front of Him. He is in no hurry, friends. Don't think you are going to push God, or rush Him, or move Him. I hear people say to someone to pray. They say, "If you go right to God, He'll begin to move." Friends, He may and then again, He may not. He will take His time. God is in no hurry. He will give Manasseh ample opportunity to turn to Him.

We are getting God's viewpoint in Chronicles. In [2Kings 21](#) we are told of the evils of Manasseh's reign, and here in Chronicles God repeats that he "did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel."

For he built again the high places which Hezekiah his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them [[2Chron. 33:3](#)].

He went into idolatry in a big way. He was as bad as Ahab and Jezebel, and he worshipped Baal as they had done.

Also he built altars in the house of the LORD, whereof the LORD had said, In Jerusalem shall my name be for ever.

And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD [[2Chron. 33:4-5](#)].

He introduced right into the temple in Jerusalem the worship of the hosts of heaven: like the worship of Jupiter, the worship of Mercury, the worship of Venus, and the worship of all the stars. In other words, he established the horoscope there. You could have had your horoscope read in the temple in that day.

I'm sorry to say that some churches actually promote this same sort of thing. It is big business today. You can go to any dime store or magazine rack and buy a horoscope. Some folk say it is just innocent fun, but it is not that for a lot of people. They put more confidence in the horoscope than they put in God.

I recall an interview on television some time ago in which an outstanding entertainer made the statement that she had been looking at her horoscope and that she was a Virgo. The girl had been married five or six times and apparently had other affairs, and I would not think she was a Virgo by any manner of calculation! And she felt that when such-and-such a star crossed such-and-such a star, that would be a very important time for her. It is amazing that in our day intelligent people can place so much confidence in the stars.

Manasseh was very much interested in the horoscope. "And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD." And he didn't stop with that.

And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom: also he observed times, and used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards: he wrought much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger [[2Chron. 33:6](#)].

He went all the way into idolatry. We are not told how far he went in causing "his children to pass through the fire." There were degrees. He could have let them pass through the fire and only get well singed. Or he could put the baby right down in the arms of that red-hot idol. You just cannot think of anything as bad as that! This is idolatry, and Manasseh seems to have gone into it all the way.

Also Manasseh used enchantments and witchcraft and dealt with familiar spirits (lit., a divining demon present in the physical body of the conjurer). In our day along with the movement back to God we are seeing a return to satanic worship.

And he set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen before all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever:

Neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel from out of the land which I have appointed for your fathers; so that they will take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses [[2Chron. 33:7-8](#)].

God had promised that if these people would worship Him and be faithful to Him, He would bless them. Notice what Manasseh is doing to Judah.

So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

And the LORD spake to Manasseh, and to his people: but they would not hearken [[2Chron. 33:9-10](#)].

Manasseh Is Captured And Then Restored (33:11-17)

You can be sure that when a man or a nation reaches this place, God will move.

Wherefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon [[2Chron. 33:11](#)].

He was actually taken from his throne and carried captive to Babylon.

And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

And prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.

Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God [[2Chron. 33:12-13](#)].

This man had a remarkable experience. I would have given him up, I'm sure, but God did not give him up. God sent trouble -- and plenty of it -- to him. He was carried away as a captive to Babylon. This should have been a warning to the nation that God was now getting ready to send them into captivity because of their continual sin. When Manasseh found himself in real trouble, he sincerely came back to God. God forgave him and restored him! Yet he was very much of a weakling, as such men generally are.

When he returned to Jerusalem, he took away the strange gods and the idols out of the house of the Lord, and he repaired the altar of the Lord and sacrificed there.

Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the LORD their God only [[2Chron. 33:17](#)].

In other words, the people never did truly come back to God but still sacrificed in the high places.

Apparently Manasseh reigned all this time. When he was a helpless captive in Babylon, God heard his prayer. This reveals how gracious God is! Here is a son of godly parents who went into sin to the very limit and then came back to God. That should be an encouragement to parents who are reading this today. Maybe you have a son or a daughter who has gone the very limit, and you despair that your child will never turn back to God. I would have given Manasseh up, but God didn't. God heard his prayer.

Reign Of Amon (33:21-23)

Amon was two and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem [[2Chron. 33:21](#)].

The evil which Manasseh had done had its effect on this young man, his son. I can understand why his son went off into evil as he did.

Friends of mine, folk of means, really lived it up until middle age. They were converted after their children were nearly grown. Then after they were converted, they had other children who are wonderful godly children. But the older children have gone the limit into sin.

But he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them;

And humbled not himself before the LORD, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more [[2Chron. 33:22-23](#)].

Amon followed in the footsteps of his father in his early days.

CHAPTERS 34 AND 35

Chapter 34

THEME: Revival during Josiah's reign

We come now to the last great revival under Josiah. The hour is late. It is five minutes before 12:00 in the history of this nation, and yet God sends revival. This is the last revival to take place before the captivity. Judah has come to the end of the line, and it is amazing that a revival takes place. It follows after the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, two men who really plunged that nation into idolatry and sin. One would think there was no hope at all, but there is always hope. The Holy Spirit is still sovereign in this matter of revival.

I do not know whether we will have a revival in our day or not. Humanly speaking, the nation of Judah could not have revival, but the Spirit of God is sovereign, and God can move in. He can move in today. There is nothing in the Word of God that would preclude that possibility.

One man said to me, "The trouble with you men who believe in prophecy and emphasize the terrible days that are ahead is that you have no place for revival." I disagree with that. My feeling is that he doesn't have any place for revival. The reason I say that is because he and his group are trying to work it up themselves. My friend, you cannot work it up or pray it down. The Spirit of God is sovereign.

Our prayer today should be, "Lord, put me in the will of God." Our prime concern is to make sure that our own lives are right before God. We are not going to get God to do something when our lives are not right in His sight. We need to straighten out our own lives before God. We need to ask ourselves these questions: Am I honest? Am I truthful? Am I pure? There is no use talking about revival as long as we are not getting right in our hearts before God. When we are right with God, then we can look to the Spirit of God to move in a sovereign way, and then we can ask Him to move according to His will.

Now we will look here at Josiah and see that God marvelously used him.

Reformation Under Josiah (34:1-9)

Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.

And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left [[2Chron. 34:1-2](#)].

You hear people today asking what is right and what is wrong. And you hear some strange answers given. Josiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. It is what God says is right that is right and what God says is wrong that is wrong.

Remember that it was God who divided the light from the darkness. You and I cannot do that! We can go into a room and turn on the light switch, and the darkness disappears. We cannot divide it; we can't run a line down the middle and say, "On this side I will put light and on this side I will put darkness." God can do that, and God can say what is right and what is wrong.

For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth

year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images [[2Chron. 34:3](#)].

In the eighth year of his reign Josiah was sixteen years old, and he began to seek God. The spiritual movement today, and the turning to the Word of God, is largely among young people. Although it is not confined to them, they certainly are the majority. I meet these young folks in my conference travels and all around the world. They are interested in the Word of God. Josiah was only sixteen when he began to seek after God. He was twenty when he began his reforms in Judah. You see, revival will lead to reformation.

As I mentioned before, when your sins are forgiven, you will pick up your bed and walk. You will walk away from your sins if you are truly converted. If revival comes in our day, we will not have a divorce problem or a sex revolution. We will see a tremendous change take place. God can accomplish this, and He may do it. This section of the Word of God can be a great encouragement to us.

Josiah was a fearless reformer. After he had cleaned up his southern kingdom of Judah, he went into the tribes of Israel in the north.

Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God [[2Chron. 34:8](#)].

When Josiah was twenty-six years old, he began the repair of the temple. It had fallen into disrepair under the reign of Manasseh, his grandfather, and Amon, his father.

And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem [[2Chron. 34:9](#)].

"Manasseh and Ephraim" are, of course, tribes of Israel. At this time the northern kingdom had been taken into Assyrian captivity; only a remnant was left in the land. These tribes, which we hear called "lost tribes," certainly were not lost in this day, as they were sending in money for the repair of the temple.

Now the temple was repaired, and they made an amazing discovery.

The Law Of Moses Is Found (34:14-31)

And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses [[2Chron. 34:14](#)].

You see, there weren't many copies in that day. There may have been a few others, but the Word of God had been lost.

And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it [[2Chron. 34:15-16](#)].

You may be saying, "I can see that this is going to be right down your alley!" It sure is, although it is not my alley, but God's alley -- His Word is very important to Him. Notice what happens.

Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king.

And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes [[2Chron. 34:18-19](#)].

Renting (or tearing) his clothes indicated strong emotion. He was dismayed when he heard the Word of God for the first time, because he and his people had strayed so far from God's commands.

And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying,

Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book [[2Chron. 34:20-21](#)].

A return to the Word of God brings revival. Nothing else will bring revival. What is wrong in our day? Why don't we see revival? The reason is simple. The church has neglected the Word of God. Churches have tried every known gimmick and every kind of method. Nothing happens. Revival does not come that way. Revival comes when people return to the Word of God and find out what God has to say.

Josiah is a shaken man, and he wants to know what God is going to do.

And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) and they spake to her to that effect.

And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me [[2Chron. 34:22-23](#)].

Now this is God's message to Josiah:

Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah:

Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched [[2Chron. 34:24-25](#)].

God will send judgment just as He promised. However, He has a personal word for Josiah.

And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard;

Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD.

Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again [[2Chron. 34:26-28](#)].

God intends to judge these people, but He will not do it until Josiah is gone.

Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem.

And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.

And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book [[2Chron. 34:29-31](#)].

My friend, let's be very candid and very matter-of-fact and very direct. I believe we could have a revival today, but first there must be a return to the Word of God to find out what God wants us to do. Then I believe there will be and there must be a total commitment to God on the part of God's people. There can be none of this halfhearted service which we see. There can be none of this business of trying to go with the world and trying to go with God. It is impossible to do both. There must be a clear-cut dedication of heart and life to God. When that takes place, the Spirit of God is free to move.

Chapter 35

The Law Of Moses Is Found (continued) (35:16-19)

In chapter 35 we have a record of the Passover that was kept. This was a new experience for his generation, and it is interesting to note that Josiah carefully followed the procedure which is written in the book of Moses.

So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the passover, and to offer burnt offerings upon the altar of the LORD, according to the commandment of king Josiah.

And the children of Israel that were present kept the passover at that time, and the feast of unleavened bread seven days.

And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah was this passover kept [[2Chron. 35:16-19](#)].

The passover is symbolic of the death of Christ. The nation has returned to the knowledge that there must be a redemption made for sins. You see, they had learned about the Passover because they had discovered the law of Moses. This was a tremendous occasion. God says, "There was no passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet."

Josiah was the man responsible for this great return to the Word of God. Now we come to the death of this man. Even godly men like this make mistakes -- all human beings do.

Death Of Josiah (35:20-25)

After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against Charchemish by Euphrates: and Josiah went out against him.

But he sent ambassadors to him, saying, What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not [[2Chron. 35:20-21](#)].

Josiah should have stayed home. He had no business engaging in this war.

Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but disguised himself, that he might fight with him, and hearkened not unto the words of Necho from the mouth of God, and came to fight in the valley of Megiddo [[2Chron. 35:22](#)].

He refused to stay out of the fight. Now notice what happens.

And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Have me away; for I am sore wounded.

His servants therefore took him out of that chariot, and put him in the second chariot that he had; and they brought him to Jerusalem, and he died, and was buried in one of the sepulchres of his fathers. And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they are written in the lamentations [[2Chron. 35:23-25](#)].

Josiah had been a good king and a great king. He had led a tremendous revival, a great turning to God. But his death ended the revival. Now God's judgment will fall upon the southern kingdom of Judah.

Chapter 36

THEME: The captivity of Judah

The days were numbered for the southern kingdom of Judah. Josiah was the last good king of the nation. All the kings who followed him were bad. There was not a good one in the lot. Their evil reigns hastened the judgment of God upon the kingdom of Judah. We are given only a brief word about their attitude toward God and a statement of the main events that brought about the ruin of the nation.

Reign Of Jehoahaz (36:1-3)

Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's stead in Jerusalem.

Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem.

And the king of Egypt put him down at Jerusalem, and condemned the land in an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold [[2Chron. 36:1-3](#)].

This son of Josiah was deposed by the king of Egypt. He was a rascal and was on the throne only three months. Things are beginning to move quickly now.

Reign Of Jehoiakim (36:5-7)

Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God.

Against him came up Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and bound him in fetters, to carry him to Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar also carried of the vessels of the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon [[2Chron. 36:5-7](#)].

During his reign the king of Babylon comes against the land.

Reign Of Jehoiachin (36:9)

Jehoiachin was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem: and he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD [[2Chron. 36:9](#)].

He didn't last very long -- he hardly got the throne warm.

Reign Of Zedekiah (36:11-14)

Zedekiah is Judah's last king.

Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned eleven years in Jerusalem.

And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet speaking from the mouth of the LORD.

And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he stiffened his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.

Moreover all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen; and polluted the house of the LORD which he had hallowed in Jerusalem [[2Chron. 36:11-14](#)].

Captivity (36:15-21)

Nebuchadnezzar now does more than knock at the door. He pushes over the wall and burns Jerusalem and takes Judah into captivity.

Here is God's explanation:

And the LORD God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place:

But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age: he gave them all into his hand.

And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon.

And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof.

And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia [[2Chron. 36:15-20](#)].

Now the next verse cites another reason for God's judgment. This is most interesting.

To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years [[2Chron. 36:21](#)].

You see, God accomplished a twofold purpose. God always has many things in mind in everything that He does. First of all, they had rejected the prophets. They were living on

borrowed time; God would have been justified to have sent them into captivity one hundred years before this time.

It makes me wonder if our nation is not living on borrowed time. How much longer will God put up with our sins? For the nation of Judah, their time had come. There was no more remedy. There is a time when a nation reaches this point. I wonder how close our nation is to this time.

Secondly, for 490 years Israel had not observed the sabbatic years. They had been breaking God's law of the land, which He had given them even before they set foot upon it: "And the LORD spake unto Moses in mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep a sabbath unto the LORD. Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof; but in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard. That which groweth of its own accord of thy harvest thou shalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undressed: for it is a year of rest unto the land" ([Lev. 25:1-5](#)). Because of their greed, they have not allowed the land to enjoy its sabbaths. In other words, they had not allowed it to remain fallow every seventh year as God had commanded. They thought they had gotten by with it. For 490 years they had been doing it, then God said, "I'll put you out of the land for seventy years so the land can enjoy its sabbaths." That is the reason the captivity lasted for seventy years. This is quite remarkable.

You see, my friend, God is not mocked. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" ([Gal. 6:7](#)).

Notice that the seventy years in exile are passed over entirely. The people are out of the land and out of the will of God. God's clock is not spelled B-U-L-O-V-A or G-R-U-E-N; God's clock is spelled I-S-R-A-E-L, and it runs only while Israel is in the land.

We have seen in this book that although there was a general decline of the nation, there were five periods of revival, renewal, and reformation. There is a striking feature which characterizes each period:

Asa Return and obedience to the Word of God
Jehoshaphat Return and obedience to the Word of God
Joash Return and obedience to the Word of God
Hezekiah Return and obedience to the Word of God
Josiah Return and obedience to the Word of God

In each instance, return to the Word of God led to the repentance of the people and the temporary reformation of the nation.

Decree To Rebuild The Temple (36:22-23)

Second Chronicles concludes with a bright hope for the future.

Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made

a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up [[2Chron. 36:22-23](#)].

This is repeated in the introduction to the Book of Ezra which continues the historical record from this point. It is wonderful to see that although God had sent His people into captivity, He had not forgotten them. How gracious He is!

Bibliography

(Recommended for Further Study)

Crockett, William Day. A Harmony of the Books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1951.

Darby, J. N. Synopsis of the Books of the Bible. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, n.d.

Davis, John J. and Whitcomb, John C., Jr. A History of Israel. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1970. (Excellent.)

Epp, Theodore H. David. Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Broadcast, 1965.

Gaebelein, Arno C. The Annotated Bible. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1912-22.

Gray, James M. Synthetic Bible Studies. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1906.

Heading, John. I & II Chronicles. Kansas City, Missouri: Walterick Publishers, 1982.

Jensen, Irving, L. I Kings with Chronicles. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1968. (A self-study guide.)

Jensen, Irving L. II Kings with Chronicles. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1968. (A self-study guide.)

Kelly, William. Lectures on the Earlier Historical Books of the Old Testament. Addison, Illinois: Bible Truth Publishers, 1874.

Knapp, Christopher. The Kings of Israel and Judah. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, 1908. (Very fine.)

Mackintosh, C. H. Miscellaneous Writings. Neptune, New Jersey: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.

Meyer, F. B. David: Shepherd, Psalmist, King. Fort Washington, Pennsylvania: Christian Literature Crusade, n.d.

Sailhamer, John. I & II Chronicles. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1983.

Sauer, Erich. The Dawn of World Redemption. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951. (An excellent Old Testament survey.)

Scroggie, W. Graham. The Unfolding Drama of Redemption. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970. (An excellent survey and outline of the Old Testament.)

Unger, Merrill F. Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament. Vol. 1. Chicago, Illinois: Moody Press, 1981. (A fine summary of each paragraph. Highly recommended.)

Wood, Leon J. Israel's United Monarchy. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979. (Excellent.)

Wood, Leon J. The Prophets of Israel. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1977. (Excellent.)